LIFESTYLE / C1
Severe chic 2009: Big everything from bags, heels to bangles

NEWS / A2
DOH: If it's from China, don't buy it

BUSINESS / B2-1
Are my Philam investments safe? What you need to know

LIFESTYLE / E1
Intimidated by Divi? Try Kamuning; you can buy your kids' UN costumes there

Paging Angelina Jolie; MILF seeks star's help

By Jaclifney Malason
Inquirer Mindanao

KORONADAL CITY—Will Angelina Jolie please step up and help solve the sequestial insurgency in Mindanao?

INSIDE: A11

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Friday, September 26, 2008 ★ Vol. 23 / No. 293 online: www.inquirer.net

Storm 'Ofel' enters RP, seen to dump more rain

By TJ Burgonio

TROPICAL STORM "OFEL" SWERVED FROM the Pacific Ocean into the Philippine area of responsibility (PAR) before dawn Thursday, threatening to bring more rain over the archipelago.

The storm slightly intensified over the

STORM: A10

Bush calls crisis summit

McCain, Obama in talks on bailout

WASHINGTON—President George W. Bush is bringing presidential candidates Barack Obama and John McCain into negotiations on a $700-billion rescue of Wall Street, as Democrats and Republicans near agreement on a bailout plan with more protection for taxpayers and new help for distressed homeowners.

Obama and McCain are calling for a bipartisan effort to deal with the crisis, about five weeks before national elections

BUSH: A9

EAGLES SOAR
The Ateneo Blue Eagles celebrate their two-game sweep of arch rivals La Salle Green Archers by hoisting the UAAP championship trophy while tournament MVP Rabeh Al-Hussein (with ring not on his neck) underscores their lofty status in the country's premier varsity league. The title showdown drew 22,955 fans to the 15,000-capacity Araneta Coliseum.

US solons meet to fix kinks in RP vets bill

By Rita M. Gerona-Robles
Correspondent

WASHINGTON—THE CHAIRS of the veterans affairs committees of the the US Senate and House of Representatives were "talking to each other" on Wednesday to try to resolve differences impeding the passage of a common bill providing benefits for Filipino veterans of World War II.

The conference was urgently sought earlier in the day by Sen. Daniel Akaka (Dem., Hawaii)—a down-to-the-wire effort to iron out funding and other concerns before the Sept. 26 adjournment of the US Congress.

Akaka is the author of Senate Bill No. 1315 (the Veterans Enhancement Act of 2008), which was approved by the Senate in April and which proposes to compensate Filipino veterans and recognize their service in the US military during the war.

The senator "is working very hard to get the best solution before this Congress adjourns,"

US SOLONS: A8

Global crisis threatens work of RP women abroad

By Terra Quiwanado

THE GLOBAL FINANCIAL CRISIS may threaten the employment of Filipina women workers in homes, hospitals and adult care facilities around the world, a Filipina diplomat said yesterday.

Delia Albert, Philippine ambassador to Germany, urged the

GLOBAL: A8

Blue Eagles dethrone Green Archers

By Jasmine W. Paya

IT WAS A CHAMPIONSHIP THAT marked a regime change for the country's most fabled and fancied school rivalry.

In a remarkable group effort by this band in blue, the Ateneo Blue Eagles dethroned the La Salle Green Archers yesterday, completing a two-game sweep of the UAAP Finals with a 62-51 victory last night in front of an overflow crowd at the Araneta Coliseum.

The Eagles, frustrated by the Sacred Treasa Tigers two years ago, accomplished their return to glory by refusing to lean on one dominant performer and showing the same kind of heart that made them this year's top seed.

"We did not win this game in offense tonight, we won it at the defensive end," Ateneo coach Norman Black said. "We're a pretty intelligent team this year. We could actually execute defensive strategies that I've never been able to execute for other teams in Ateneo. A lot of credit goes to the players for being dedicated to defense."

And Finals Most Valuable Player Nonoy Baclao epitomized the Eagles' tough defensive stance by averaging 8.5 rebounds and 3.5 blocks despite turning only 6.6 points in the series.

"For a while there it did get a little bit scary at the end," Black said. "But again, our defense held up as it has the entire year."

Chris Tiu fueled the Eagles' comeback from a sluggish start by unloading 13 of his 16 points in the first half, which more than made up for a Game 1 performance that saw the King Eagle parking up three quick fouls and scoring a paltry two markers.

Season MVP Rabeh Al-Hus-

BLUE EAGLES: A9

Toxic milk downs baby zoo animals

SHANGHAI—THE TWO BABY orangutans and a lion cub at the Hangzhou Safari Park were the latest victims of China's milk crisis. (Related stories on Pages A2, A3.)

The baby animals were found suffering from kidney problems Wednesday after concerned officials sent them to a veterinarian for a checkup.

The animals at the safari park near Shanghai have kidney stones after being fed milk powder for more than a year, said Zhang Yu, a veterinarian with the Hangzhou Zhangyu

TOXIC: A8

What, no more movies at the mall? Cutting back on costs

Entertainment

By Marinel R. Cruz
Entertainment

IMAGINE LIFE WITHOUT movies, music and television.

Not funny.

And you're not alone. But because of the runaway prices of ... well, everything, even Filipinos who consider watching movies in cinemas or buying recorded music an necessities have had to modify their reactions, some more drastically than others.

For Jane Dimitri, a single parent, movie-watching in mall cinemas is more than entertainment; it's quality time with her son Tyrone, 9.

Mother and son started the habit three years ago, seeing one or two movies a week. A cinema ticket cost P98 to P120 at the time. Now, it can cost up to P175. They have since cut in half the frequency of their outings.

"I set aside money for those trips to the theater," says Dimitri, 37. "Otherwise, Tyrone wouldn't

MALL: A10

I Father's Home: Let's not go there again. Times are tough. You believe it. I know it. We're going through it. Enough said. It's time to do something. Now. And quick. The business process here—for every aspect of your life. Let us know about your own suggestions that are working to get you through the rough times. If we're together, we can tough it out. Send suggestions to joannerondinaquino.com.ph.)

SPECIAL REPORT

Project Editor
Joan V. Sorreniente jr.

Beware, criminals now use hypnotism

By Alcuin Papa

CRIMINALS ARE NOW MORE creative in preying on their victims, employing new methods which include, believe it or not, hypnotism, an antiterror group said yesterday.

In an interview with the Inquirer, Tessie Ang See of the Movement for the Restoration of Peace and Order (MRPO) warned the public, particularly Tsinoy (Chinese-Filipino) families, to be more vigilant and aware of the new modus operandi used by criminal groups.

"Criminals are now more creative in perpetrating their dastardly acts moreso since these are difficult times. Tsinoy families are especially vulnerable," she said.

One of the more unusual methods is the use of hypnotism, Ang See said.

She said her group had received stories from three re-

BEWARE: A10

Rescuers find 3 miners' bodies in tunnel

By Elmer Kristian Dauigoy
in Benguet
and Amy R. Remo
in Manila

ITOGON, BENGUET—Rescuers' hopes of finding a group of trapped miners alive were dashed yesterday with the discovery of three bodies in a flooded underground tunnel.

The number of trapped miners was raised from 14 to 16 after it was found that two others had also entered the Antamok tunnel owned by Benguet Corp. on Monday as Typhoon "Nina" crossed the Cordillera.

A team composed of 15 to 20 local miners found the bodies at 3:30 p.m. in Shaft 114, about 270 feet from the tunnel opening, said Fred Jaenito, a former

RESCUERS: A13

13 TO GO
Local miners working as rescue workers on Thursday night bring out the first body recovered in a flooded mine tunnel in Itogon, Benguet. As of 6 p.m. Thursday, the bodies of three of the 16 small-scale miners had been found. The bloated body had to be wrapped in a sack to minimize its stench.

WEATHER FORECAST

Second FRONTPAGE

SIDE DIGIT 2 4 7 4 6 2 | SUERTRES 2 6 6 | 7 0 1 | 4 1 6

EZ2 8 21 31 18 | 3 1 6

SUPERLOTTO 6/49 5 17 18 33 37 49 P74,258,888.40

'If it's from China, don't buy it'

2M kilos of Chinese milk sold in RP stores, markets

By Marguax C. Ortiz and Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

MORE THAN TWO MILLION KILOGRAMS OF milk imported from China were able to enter the country this year, the Bureau of Customs (BOC) said yesterday.

Customs Commissioner Napoleon Morales said 2,138,397 kilograms of Chinese milk were imported from Jan. to Sept. 9.

"The milk, both unsweetened (powdered) and not, (were) sold in markets and stores all over the Philippines," Morales said in an interview.

The bureau has identified Fly Ace Corp. and Pancrem Brands Phils. Inc. as the local importers of Chinese milk.

Fly Ace Corp. imports milk by Gloworld, based while Pancrem Brands Phils. Inc. is behind the entry of Anchor Plain Farmed milk drinks into the country, according to Morales.

Four children in China have died and more than 54,000 have fallen ill after drinking milk tainted with the industrial chemical melamine, which damages the kidney.

Melamine has been found in infant formula and other milk products from 22 of China's dairy companies.

With the world's third biggest dairy sector, China's milk powder exports in 2007 grew to 62,000 tons, an increase of more than 200 percent from 2006.

Six companies

On an unofficial list given to the Inquirer by a ranking official of the Bureau of Food and Drugs (BFAD), at least six local companies were registered to be importing milk products from China.

These include Pancrem Brands Philippines Inc., Boy Lear Biscuits Store Inc., East Link Ventures, Lotino Philippines Inc., Highmark International Marketing Corp., and Melissa & Sons Philippines Inc.

The list, however, did not name the specific milk products of these companies.

The Department of Health has already ordered the revocation of licenses of importers of milk products from China.

Based on its initial findings, the DOH assured the public the country remained free of melamine-laced milk and milk products from China.

"There are no indications yet that we have been affected," Health Secretary Francisco Duque III yesterday said in a phone interview after he led an unscheduled inspection of stores selling Chinese products in the Divisoria Market in Manila City.

Though he already ordered that children with kidney problems be monitored for possible exposure to contaminated milk, no case has been confirmed to have been caused by consumption of milk so far.

NEDA-TF Secretary Francisco Duque checks out China-made product in a grocery

Don't wait for BIR

Duque reiterated that the DOH had not released any list of banned brands although he said the department would probably release a list of products that would test positive for melamine.

"If the milk is made from China, then don't buy it. They (brands) not wait for a list," Duque said.

He also warned retail outlets in romance from their shelves all China-made milk and milk products or the health department would file charges against them. Violating outlets also risked the loss of their business permits.

This is the same warning he gave a store owner in the Divisoria Market which he found yesterday to be selling milk products from China.

The store owner have complied with the order of the health department banning the importation and sale of all milk and milk products from China, according to Ongpin.

Nuñez in Binondo yesterday found three malls in Makati and 168 Mall selling bottled milk and milk candies from China.

Supt. Nelson Telan, chief of BFPO Metair station, said the sample products his men took from the malls would be taken to BFAD for analysis.

Noodle in haystack

In a similar tassel to all BOC district and port collector yesterday, Morales said all owners of Chinese milk and dairy product importers had been ordered following the DOH ban on the importation, distribution and sale of infant formula and milk from China.

"Whoever brings in these products would be subjected to criminal prosecution," he said.

Over at the National Epidemiology Center in director Dr. Enrique Tayag said his office was still waiting for reports from government hospitals which have been tasked with screening the cases of children diagnosed with kidney problems.

"This is like looking for needles in a haystack," Tayag said. He noted that the development of kidney stones among infants is the country "is very rare."

Breastfeeding

He said few cases of kidney stones among children had been reported to begin sub-three months caused by heavy intake of junk food.

The World Health Organization and the United Nations Children's Fund yesterday renewed their appeal to mothers to breast-feed their babies.

"Ideally, all infants should be fed exclusively with breast milk for the first six months of life. No other liquid or food, not even water, is needed, during this period," the WHO and the United said in a joint statement. With a report from Thea G. Gonzaga

What went before: China's tainted products

INTERNATIONAL CONCERNS OVER China's food safety problems heightened in 2007 after huge levels of toxins and industrial chemicals were found in Chinese-made products.

In April 2007, the US Food and Drugs Administration (FDA) found out through tests that North American dogs and cats had been poisoned by Chinese pet food ingredients tainted with the chemical melamine. Melamine is a nonindustrial chemical that can cause kidney stones and lead to kidney failure.

The FDA since then began warning consumers about food eaten in toy vanilla, defective tires, and toothpaste made with diethylene glycol, a toxic ingredient more commonly found in antifreeze. All the products were imported from China.

On June 27, 2007, China closed down 180 food factories after inspectors found that industrial chemicals, such as malachite, were being used to make candy, pickles, crackers and seafood. Formaldehyde is a disinfectant found in cancer in humans.

The next day US government health officials said they were detaining three types of Chinese fish—catfish, bass and dace—as well as shrimp and eel after repeated testing turned up traces of the antibiotics nitrofurans and fluoroquinolone, as well as the antifungals malachite green and gentian violet.

In July 2007, the Philippine Bureau of Food and Drugs (BFAD) said was suspending more than 900 products from China, including cosmetics and toothpaste, after several brands of candy and cookies were found positive for formaldehyde.

The BFAD also banned an advisory warning the public against eating four contaminated Chinese food products—White Rabbit Creamy Candy (Shanghai Guan Sheng Yan Food General Factory), Milk Candy (Romantic Fish Food Industry Co. Inc.), Beijing Grape Juice (Dongguan Baotong Foodstuff Co. Ltd.) and Ning Kang Foods Grape Flavor (Dongguan Yonghang Food Co. Ltd.).

In August 2007, the world's largest toy maker, Mattel, recalled 1.5 million Chinese-made toys due to lead-paint fears.

China's tainted product crisis widened on Sept. 19 after Chinese government tests found melamine (first found by the FDA in Chinese pet food ingredients last year) in liquid milk produced by three of its leading dairy companies.

The BFAD has confirmed that 11 Chinese milk products are being sold in the Philippines. Hline Heworia, *Inquirer Research*

In tainted food crisis, China's elite eat well

BEIJING—WHILE CHINA GRAPples with its latest tainted food crisis, the political elite are served the freshest, safest delicacies.

They get bamboo rice hand from the grasslands of Inner Mongolia, organic tea from the foothills of Tibet and rice watered by melted mountain snow.

And it's all supplied by a special government outfit that provides elite-organic goods from farms working under the strictest guidelines.

That serves food supply experts in stark contrast to the fluttering of ordinary citizens who have faced recurring food scandals—organs like with harmful pesticide residue, fish tainted with a cancer-causing dyestuff, eggs colored with industrial dye, baby liquor causing "deformities or death, holiday pastries with heroin-laden filling.

Now that the country's most reputable dairies have been found selling baby formula and other milk products tainted with cancer-linked chemical that can cause kidney failure, many Chinese don't know what to buy. Tens of thousands of children have been sickened and four babies have died.

Some people angry

Knowing that these leaders do not face these problems has made some people angry.

"Food safety is a high priority for children and families of government officials. So are national citizens too entitled to safe food?" asked Zheng Lixun, dwelling her seven-month-old grandson's baby formula after he got checked for kidney stones at Beijing Children's Hospital.

The State Council General Government Office Specialized Supply Center is specifically designed to avoid the problems troubling the general population.

Antibiotics, hormones

"We all know that average production facilities use large quantities of chemical fertilizers and pesticides. Antibiotics and hormones are commonly used in raising livestock and poultry. Farmed aquatic products are contaminated by various kinds of water pollution," the center's director, Zhu Yonghua, said in a speech.

"It goes without saying that these are harmful when consumed by humans," Zhu told executives at supplier Shandong Ruyi Biological Medical Technology Development Co., which posted the speech on its website earlier this year.

Zhu's speech has been widely circulated by Chinese bureaucrats on Mogu search engine in recent days, with many expressing outrage that top government officials have a separate—and safer—food supply than the public.

The special food center evaluates 600 standards on suppliers like Shandong Ruyi, which makes health supplements designed to boost immunity and energy. Foods must be organic, are genetically modified and meet international food standards, said a manager in the center's product department, who only gave her surname, Chang.

A-list clientele

The reasons its A-list clientele of government officials and retirees of vice ministers rank as higher.

It's not unusual for China's leadership to have a special food supply; the practice somewhat back thousands of years to farms providing ingredients for lavish imperial meals or the grocery spice dishes favored by Communist Party Chair Mao Zedong.

The latest model Hunan's ruling dinner diet: rice food that was unavailable to the masses in South Korea, where withering famines have seen tens of thousands starve over the past 13 years, leader Kim Jong-il is a gourmet known for his love of lobster, shark's fin soup and sushi. His former private chef has said Kim keeps an extensive collection of vintage French wines.

Nation A label

Set up in 2004, China's Special Food Supply Center is almost as secretive as its high-end clientele whose precise number is unclear but likely includes hundreds of top political leaders, their families and retired cadres. Much of the information on its website was removed after media inquiries and interview requests this week.

Goods chosen to earn the highest standards are stamped with the label "Nation A," which stands for "top real, irreplaceable the best," according to the website. Those products are for senior politicians or government offices and not released to the general consumer market, until a customer service agent summoned Dong.

Rice fed by melted snow from Mt. Changbai, which straddles the China-North Korean border, gets a "Nation A" rating, according to the website.

The center serves the country for purveyors in almost famous for a particular product, said Zhang, the manager.

Special seeds

Those include fish from Hubei province—known traditionally as the "land of fish and rice"—rice from mountainous Yunnan province shielding Tibet, and beef and mutton from the Inner Mongolian steppes, according to Zhu's speech.

As for rice, some come from the northeast, grown from seeds cultivated by experts from the Jilin Academy of Agricultural Sciences, said cadre manager Wu Hongbao of Gulang Heinongmi Organic Agricultural Development Co.

It "has a very small output, but tastes very good. And it doesn't involve genetic engineering," said Wu.

We said 90 percent of the rice goes to the Beijing headquarters—a sensible source for revered party cadres. The remainder is sold on the market, he said, at $4 a pound—a price five times higher than regular organic rice and 13 times more than the price of ordinary rice.

Fresh and tender

A brand of organic tea supplied to the center sells for $187 a pound. "It's fresh and tender, smells good and has a bright color," said Xia Dan, an employee of the Huaxiang Tea Co. in eastern Zhejiang province.

The latest food safety scandals began with tainted baby formula from one company, but widened to include products from 22 of China's dairies. Countries as far away as Korea and Colombia have banned or recalled Chinese dairy imports, while cakes, candies and other products made with milk products have come under suspicion.

Since the scandal broke earlier this month, sales of Chinese milk have plummeted after top dairies Mengniu Dairy Group Co. and Yili Industrial Group Co. were found to have sold contaminated milk.

Milk for state banquets

Chinese looking for reassurance have turned to one company not named in any recalls—Inner Mongolia Yili Food Ltd.

It proudly advertises that its milk is used for state banquets in the Great Hall of the People and has seen its sales triple in Beijing, while demand has outstripped supply to at least one province. And that's despite the fact that its prices—about $1.60 a quart—is 20 percent higher than other brands. AP

Salvor cuts hole through sunken ship's hull

By Riza T. Olchondra

THREE HOURS AND FOUR DAYS AFTER Subic-based Inc.'s M/V Princess of the Stars sank, the long process of its salvage began last week with the cutting of a hole in the hull through which workers could enter the ship's cargo hold maybe recovered.

Capt. Roberto Avis of Harbor Star, partner of US-based salvor Titan Salvage, said in a statement that divers cut a "1 meter by 1.5 meter" opening at the starboard (right) side of the ship yesterday.

Harbor Star's divers started surveying the vessel on Wednesday when weather cleared off Sibuyan Island. On the salvor's second working day, its divers cut a hole one meter away from the container of the automobile, a fertilizer said in be harmful to humans.

"If the good weather holds till tomorrow, we will be able to make the opening 2 x 1.5 meters, allowing divers to go in," Avis said.

He said the divers will survey the cargo area and determine the best way to retrieve the toxic cargo shipped by Del Monte and Dayco Philippines.

Once the cargo hold has been fully surveyed, Harbor Star will draft "a concrete plan" on how best to remove the toxic cargo from the ship.

Harbor Star said the divers were able to cut an opening close to the target container because of the look-see done using a remote operated vehicle (ROV) with cameras. But the ROV was not able to go around the cargo area much because its propellers and salvor got entangled with the debris.

Water around the container and inside the cargo hold tested negative for contamination.

A memorial mass and first dive was supposed to have happened on Sept. 25, with Task force officials in attendance, but bad weather until Tuesday prevented the salvor from going to the wreck site.

Task Force chief Elena Bautista said the divers start working at 8 a.m. and end at 5 p.m. She declined to confirm whether a hole has been cut, saying that she has yet to confirm this and that there will be updates at 9 a.m. Friday.

UPSIDE DOWN. The Princess of the Stars

Only ₱40M in cash advances still unliquidated, says Army

By Nikko Dizon

THE PHILIPPINE ARMY YESTERday said that party-list representative Satur Ocampo was "highly misinformed" in alleging that the military service command had P1.6 billion in unliquidated cash advances dating back to 2003.

Brig. Gen. Reynaldo Mapagu, the Army chief of staff, held a press briefing yesterday with other top Army officials "to set the record straight on the allegations" of Ocampo who brought up the issue at the congressional budget hearings.

Army officials said that while the Commission on Audit indeed reported last January that the Army had to liquidate P335 million worth of cash advances for subsistence allowance, travel and other items, much of the amount had already been accounted for.

Citing the annual COA report, Ocampo alleged that the Army had alleged P1.6 billion in unliquidated cash advances and that part of the amount was spent for the "payroll and travel of officials."

Ocampo apparently came up with the amount of P1.6 billion by adding the total unliquidated cash advances of all previous Army commanding generals, starting with Gen. Efren Abu until the term of incumbent Armed Forces Chief Gen. Alexander Yano, who was until last May the Army chief.

Mapagu and other Army officials said the amounts should not be added together since "the clearing and liquidation of cash advances is a continuing process."

Mapagu said that as of Aug. 31 this year, only P40 million in cash advances for payroll and travel remain to be liquidated.

"Majority of the unliquidated cash advances represent the three-month subsistence allowances of Cadets, which were granted in December 2007," Mapagu said.

He said as early as February the Army had already accounted for 97 percent of its unliquidated cash advances on payroll funds.

Mapagu also said the failure of the Army to liquidate its cash advances should not be blamed solely on its commanding generals, as Ocampo seemed to be implying in his allegations, he said.

"The accountabilities cannot be solely attributed to past Philippine Army commanders or to an employee or whoever is in the position, but as an accountability of the organization as whole," Mapagu said.

Col. Oscar Lopez, chief of the management fiscal office, said the Army's accumulated unliquidated balances date as far back as the 1980s and 1970s, part of which are considered "active accounts" amounting to some P24 million.

"Some of those who are accountable are no longer in the service while the others have already died. This has to go through a process of adjudication by a certain board wherein this will be requested for a write-off," Lopez said.

Other retired officers or soldiers who remain accountable for unliquidated expenses have wanted by the Army and are being compelled to pay by deducting the amount from their monthly pensions, Lopez said.

Military seeks ₱10B more to wipe out rebs

DEFENSE SECRETARY GILBERTO TEODORO has asked for an additional P10 billion for the military's budget for next year to enable the armed forces and communist insurgents by 2010.

Teodoro's request amounts to a 17.7 percent increase on the P56.3 billion already requested by the military in the 2009 budget. It comes after the breakdown of peace negotiations with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front and the continued fighting.

"We need the money to increase the operational tempo of our campaign to defeat the insurgency," Teodoro said at the budget hearing in the House of Representatives yesterday.

President Macapagal-Arroyo has said she wants the insurgency by the communist New People's Army to be ended by the time she leaves office in 2010.

She also has said she wants to resolve the campaign by the MILF for a so-called Bangsamoro homeland in the south.

Peace talks with the MILF collapsed last month after rogue commanders went on their rampage following a decision by the Supreme Court to block a deal to expand an autonomous Muslim region in the south to be controlled by the rebels. Nearly 500 people have been killed in the fighting.

Teodoro said the extra money would be used to recruit more soldiers, repair ships and helicopters and buy more ammunitions.

The military is also eligible to receive a separate P5 billion stimulus of the budget to upgrade its Vietnam War era weapons systems, build new bases and training facilities.

Rep. Rozzano Rufino Biazon, senior vice chair of the House appropriations committee that is reviewing the military budget, said plans to end the insurgencies by 2010 would be doomed to failure by the lack of funds, adding it was unfair for the military to be set these goals and not be given the appropriate budget.

He said the proposed P56 billion appropriation for the military gives the armed forces very little.

"It may be said then that the threat is definite the insurgency is doomed to fail on its own accord, then the military should not be given the resources it needs to finish the job," Biazon said.

TEODORO

Biazon said the government had better increase the AFP's budget or review and retire Mr. Arroyo's deadline to defeat the insurgencies.

"It will be unfair to the AFP to be set up for failure by setting a deadline that is not supported with the appropriations needed to fulfill the mission. The AFP has the will, determination, skill and manpower to fight," Biazon said.

"Regrettably, the financial strength is sorely lacking," he said. Reuters and Voice of the Andes

Airports on alert

By Tarra Quismundo

EYEWITNESSES OF THE PAKISTAN HOtel suicide bombing earlier this week has reached Manila as airport authorities raised the security alert at all air terminals in the capital as a precautionary measure.

Alfonso Cusi, general manager of the Manila International Airport Authority (MIAA), this week placed the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) complex on red alert and directed security officials to undertake more stringent security monitoring of Manila's three international terminals.

"So we raised the red alert at the NAIA, this should not be a cause for alarm to passengers. There is no threat to airport security. We are confident about our security set-up. We just don't want to be complacent," said Cusi in a statement.

Nina security and emergency services chief Angel Saculles declared the red alert on Tuesday afternoon and directed "all police and security forces... to exercise extra vigilance and strictly implement all preventive security measures and procedures" to prevent any attack.

Intelligence monitoring was also heightened as passenger movement areas of the NAIA (terminals 1, 2 and 3, and security detail at checkpoints were beefed up. Bomb-sniffing dogs were also placed on more frequent patrols inside the terminals and the airport periphery.

"All security personnel are on standby at their respective barracks, ready to respond to any eventuality" Cusi said in a statement.

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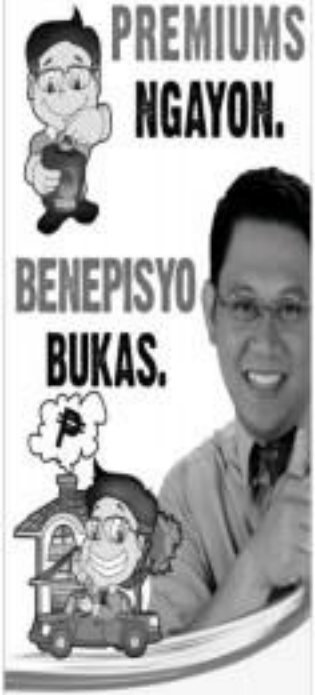

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HERO PROJECT Government and medical leaders join arms in support of the Health Education Reform Order (Hero) Project.

Gov't, medical groups launch health program

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—Leaders of government and the medical profession have forged a nationwide health-education program aimed at reducing the mortality and incidence of the country's top killer diseases.

The partnership was forged here on Wednesday and was spearheaded by the leagues of local government units and the Philippine College of Physicians (PCP) and the Philippine Medical Association (PMA), organizers said in a statement yesterday.

Billed as the Health Education Reform Order (Hero) Project, the consortium undertook to be an advocacy on preventive health education.

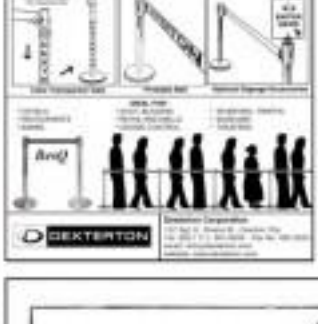
It will be carried out nationwide among elementary and high schools by public school teachers and personnel of the Department of Education, at the barangay level by the Department of Health and supported by social workers of the Department of Social Welfare and Development and various local government units under the Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines (Ulap) and its member leagues and medical practitioners belonging to the PCP and the PMA.

Dr. Charlie Ya, PCP president, said this advocacy which was conceived and developed by the PCP ultimately aims to reduce mortality and incidence of the top 10 killer diseases in the country and in the same time, prevent any outbreak or spreading of diseases and ailments in barangays all over the country through education and enlightenment programs.

Among those who signed the memorandum of cooperation during the opening of the three-day PCP mid-year convention were Education Secretary Jesli Lapus; Social Welfare Secretary Esperanza Cabral; Dr. Cora Balbas, DOH Region 4 director representing Health Secretary Francisco Duque; Puerto Princesa City Mayor Bros Hue Abalos, Ulap and League of Cities president on behalf of all local government units; Mayor Edward S. Hagedorn co-host of Hero Project town; Liham de Leon, executive director of the League of Municipalities representing LMP president Mayor Ramon Guico; Dr. Oscar Tirio, PMA vice president; Dr. Charlie Ya, PCP president and Dr. Cynthia Cuayo-Apio, PMA Hero Project national coordinator.

Lapus lauded the PCP and other partner organizations in the project for accomplishing and forging a strong partnership that will help promote health care and awareness and ultimately social reforms in the country. Preventive health care at the grassroots level is the key to a healthier, more productive citizenry, Lapus said.

Cabral, one of the country's top cardiologists and herself a former PCP president, commended the all-out support of the DSWD to the Hero Project to ensure that the benefits of a grassroots health education program will reach the poorest constituents nationwide.



CHR, lawyers press OK of Rome Statute

By Jerome Aning

THE COMMISSION ON HUMAN Rights and the Integrated Bar of the Philippines renewed their call for the ratification of the Rome Statute on the International Criminal Court to protect the human rights and punish those who commit genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

Speaking in a conference on the ICC that the Supreme Court organized, CHR Chair Leila de Lima and IBP President Feliciano Bautista lamented that the Senate's refusal will bar us from the treaty for ratification by the Senate.

The Philippines is among the 40 countries which signed but have not ratified the Rome Statute. The Court came into being on July 1, 2002 after ratification by 60 countries. To date, there are 106 member-states of the ICC, with two more, Switzerland and Cook Islands, set to become parties on Oct. 1.

"We should be at the forefront for upholding human rights[illegible] really don't know and I can't speculate why there's no ratification yet," De Lima told reporters in an interview.

Bautista, in his speech, said he was disappointed about the delay in the ratification. He said Philippine Court to protect fundamental human rights needs to be reinforced by willingness to prosecute and punish those who violate them.

Chief Justice Reynato Puno, during a question-and-answer portion, said if the Rome Statute would be ratified, "then will strengthen the rule of law in the Philippines in the sense that particular crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity, if perpetrated here can be taken to the ICC for a decision, punishment of those who are guilty."

Supreme Court Associate Justice Adolfo Azcuna said that ratification of the ICC is a political issue. He recalled that the high court had come out with a decision calling on President Macapagal-Arroyo to send the treaty to the Senate for ratification.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Friday, September 26, 2008
25th Week in Ordinary Time
Cosmas and Damian

1st Reading: Jol 2:1-11
Gospel: Lk 9:46-50

One day when Jesus was praying alone, and his close his disciples, he asked them, "What do people say about me?" And they answered, "Some say that you are John the Baptist; others say that you are Elijah, and still others that you are one of the first ones prophets risen from the dead." Again Jesus asked them, "But then do you say I am?" Peter answered, "The Messiah of God." Then Jesus spoke to them, giving them some orders not to tell this to any one.

And he added, "The Son of Man must suffer many things, he will be rejected by the elders and chief priests and teachers of the Law, and put to death. Then after three days he will be raised to life."

Commentary

Jesus does not simply happen to mention his upcoming passion, death and resurrection of Jesus being the dreaded to keep him from the mission to suffer and die upon the cross.

Jesus is the Suffering Servant foretold by the prophets, the one who will endure hardships, persecution and cruel death to fulfillment of his mission. Jesus is the true way for the Father to redeem the human race by paying with the blood the debt of our sins. If we are to follow Jesus and desire to be one with him, we too must be willing to follow him all the way to the cross.

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TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL SURVEY

PAGC on corruption list: Just perception

By Michael Lim Ubac

THE IMAGE OF THE PHILIPPINES as a corrupt country is only a matter of "perception," the Malacañang integrity body said yesterday.

The Presidential Anti-Graft Commission (PAGC) yesterday refuted a survey by the Transparency International that the country's level of corruption had worsened.

Based on the annual Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) by Transparency International released Tuesday, the Philippines ranked 141st out of the 180 nations studied, a 16-notch drop from its ranking in 2007.

The country scored 2.5 points compared with 2.2 points last year.

The index uses statistics perception of the degree of corruption as seen by business people and country analysts and ranges between zero, which is highly corrupt, and 10, which is very clean.

The CPI measures the perceived levels of public-sector corruption in a given country and is a composite index, drawing on different expert and business surveys.

"The report of Berlin-based Transparency International was based solely on a survey of public perception, and not on a factual assessment of the actual situation. As such, it does not reflect the realities on the ground," insisted PAGC chair Constantino Jr. Gaerlan.

Negative press

In a statement, Jr. Gaerlan said that "perception is based on what one hears on the radio, reads in the newspapers, and sees on television and the Internet."

"And since the practice of press freedom in the Philippines tends to give greater prominence to negative news because these arrest greater public attention and conform to the media role as the people's watchdog, naturally the limits of perception is framed to the negative."

Jr. Gaerlan said she was not saying that the country was on rapid rise.

"But it doesn't mean that there is no corruption in the countries that have scored high in the CPI. One factor may be their press is more contained, especially in less democratic countries," she said.

Stick sans a carrot

Jr. Gaerlan cited the CPIs seven "failings," as pointed out by one of Transparency International's founders Frederick Gallasp—only punishing the bribe takers, not the givers; irregular and uncontrolled country coverage; biased sample: more than 90 percent of the world is missing; inconsistent and sometimes ignorant answers; far too narrow and imprecise definition of corruption; does not measure trends or cannot reward genuine reformers; and guilty by association and conditionality.

"The CPI, in other words, has become a stick without a carrot. It is all but impossible to improve their scores in the CPI through governance reforms and sustained anti-corruption efforts. The challenge ahead is evident: after ten years, it is time to find new measurements," Jr. Gaerlan said, quoting Galtung, an expert in anti-corruption and public integrity development.

In fact, she said the Transparency International website even mentioned that it was difficult to assess the overall levels of corruption in different countries based on hard empirical data such as comparing the amount of bribes or the number of prosecutions or court cases.

"That's why they do only perception surveys," Jr. Gaerlan said.

"Unfortunately, the Transparency International report, which mostly uses opinion surveys as bases, further creates negative public perception of corruption that is consequently but unfairly used in charting the country's position in the world's corruption map."

This only aggravated what had already been a crippling problem and even expanding it on a global scale, she explained.

"These types of misconception will, but dampen our national spirit and trigger an unfounded feeling of hopelessness and helplessness, and then cause some to give up towards achieving success in our fight against graft," Jr. Gaerlan said.

Moreover, she said the CPI did not consider the actions being undertaken in the Philippines, where the anti-graft campaign has become a flagship project and the centerpiece of the Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan (MTPDP) of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Since 2006, the PAGC chair said that the MTPDP had brought about the professionalization and strengthening of the antigraft bodies such as creation and sustainable implementation of the Integrity Development Action Plan, convergence of different stakeholders in the anticorruption arena, tightening of rules on asset disclosure and impeachment and multi-sectoral efforts in prosecuting graft cases.

She also stressed that the MTPDP intensified asset forfeiture efforts against grafters, filing of charges against public servants who fail to liquidate cash advances, comprehensive anticorruption judicial reform programs, and enhancement of coercive integrity among others steps taken to combat corruption.

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THE MANILA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AUTHORITY

PINOY SCHOLARS Members of the fourth batch of Filipino scholars of Taiwan's Kainan University pose with Ms. Isabel D. Gidaremo, director for finance and information of the Manila Economic and Cultural Office (fourth from left) and University of Asia and Pacific's Dr. Bernardo M. Villegas after a seminar held by the UAP and Mesa recently to prepare the students for college life in Taiwan. Since 2001, Mesa has arranged for 43 students to study business in Kainan University.

UN honors Smart for pro-poor business

By Cynthia D. Balana

WIRELESS SERVICE PROVIDER SMART Communications was an award this week from the United Nations for giving the poor access to communication and micro-enterprise opportunities.

A statement from the UN Information Center in Manila said Smart was among 10 private companies given the World Business and Development Awards (WBDA) for their work in improving the lives of the world's most disadvantaged people, "proving that making a profit and doing the right thing" are not mutually exclusive."

Held under the patronage of Queen Rania Al Abdullah of Jordan and Senegal's President Abdoulaye Wade, the award ceremony is part of the special focus on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) during the opening week of the United Nations General Assembly in New York City.

Established by the International Chamber of Commerce in 2000, the WBDA recognizes the contribution of the private sector to achieve the MDGs through their core business. Its unprecedented 306 applications from 44 countries were received for this year's awards.

The WBDA showcases creative initiatives by corporations, large and small, who apply their core business expertise in world-wide efforts to achieve the MDGs. Its sponsors include the UN Development Programme, the world bank's global development network which supports national partners to address development challenges and achieve the MDGs.

According to the statement, this year's winners included projects that provide Nigerian farmers with commercial finance and technical assistance to produce higher quality crops, expand electricity in the poorest neighborhoods of Brazil and provide credit services to the poor through mobile phones in Kenya.

In the Philippines, there were only one million landline subscribers and 100,000 mobile phone owners, all of whom belonged to the rich before Smart introduced low-cost mobile phone subscription in 1994.

Following its exceptional strategy and rolling out the success of a project called 'Smart Load,' the company has introduced about 20 other innovative products/services in the span of just over 10 years. These products have revolutionized the telecommunication market in the Philippines.

"That is a great honor for Smart and for the Philippines. We are both elated and humbled. This award is not only very prestigious, but is also most meaningful. We are challenged to do much more to build our business in ways that help our country," the statement quoted Napoleon L. Nazareno, Smart president and CEO as saying.

Dureza hospitalized

NEW YORK (UPI) — PRESS SECRETARY Jesus Dureza was admitted to the New York Presbyterian Hospital after he complained of severe stomach pains late Wednesday night (early Thursday in Manila).

An official statement from the Office of the Press Secretary said Dureza was given pain relievers and was made to undergo various tests.

Dureza had to skip dinner with Philippine Ambassador to the United Nations Hilario Davide and Cabinet for war hosting for media covering President Macapagal-Arroyo's five-day trip to the United Nations General Assembly.

President Arroyo is scheduled to return to Manila late Thursday. — B. Zamora

Padaca task force vs loggers needs boost —Atienza

ENVIRONMENT Secretary Lito Atienza has asked the military and police to strengthen Isabela Gov. Grace Padaca's task force as she steps up a crackdown on poachers of timber in the Northern Sierra Madre National Park.

"Gov. Padaca's efforts are only admirable but also commendable coz why is Isabela's natural wealth should be protected for the benefit of the majority but only to put the few under political dynasties of the province in their proper perspective," he said.

Atienza had dispatched Padaca several times and received offense giving her the authority to arrest and file charges against violators of environmental laws.

Since arriving last task force on illegal logging last July, Padaca has been cracking down on illegal loggers that have cut a wide swath of timber stands in the 359,486-hectare national park.

Last week Padaca said she had been encountering still resistance from archers (Cabalantian opposers) and indigenous (Ifug Ikalahan) people and their families.

She said this was why she decided to tap policemen and soldiers to deal with the "high-level of tension and tension," and recover some 11 million board feet of illegally cut logs on top of the mountain.

Atienza has ordered the auction of 1,000 cubic board feet of hardwood such as narra, ed lauan and tanguile seized from the natural park by the Isabela government and environment personnel, professors and soldiers.

The logs were estimated to be worth nearly P3 million.

"The confiscated logs will be sold to the highest bidder on an 'as is, where is' basis. We do not intend to ride this task. But rather than leaving the seized logs exposed to the elements and eventually weakened useless, logs must be taken to make the environment cleaner more a productive purpose," Atienza said. TJ Burgonio

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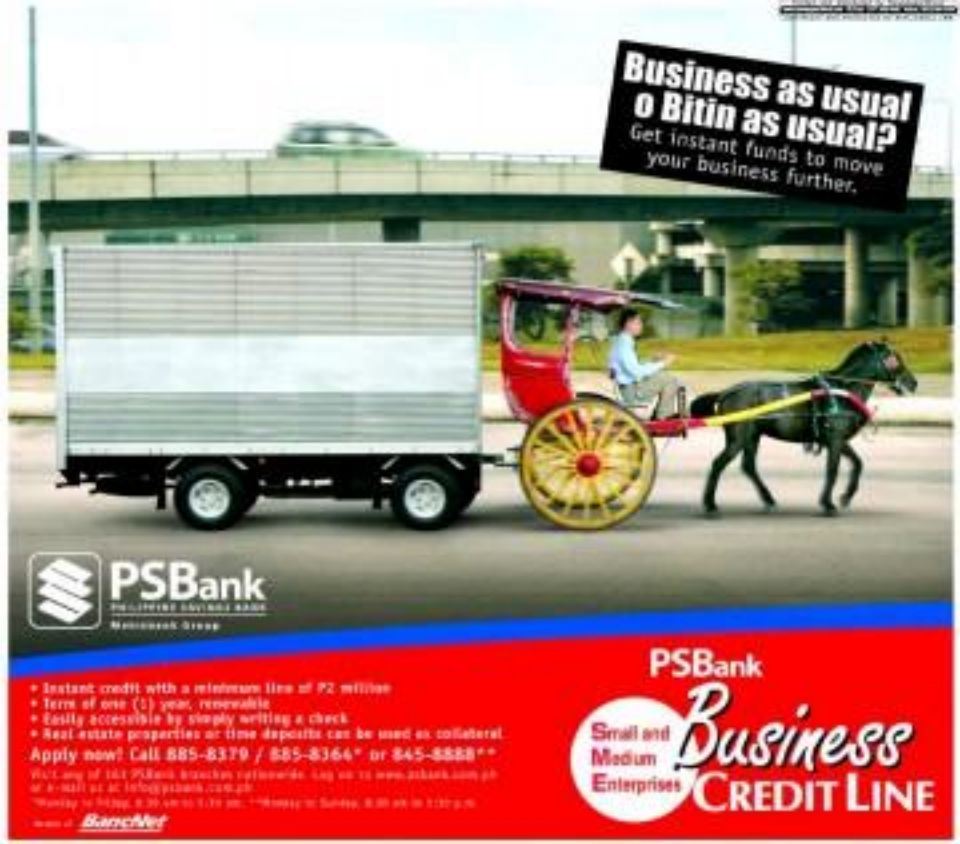

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Storm 'Ofel' enters RP, seen to dump more rain

From page A1

Pacific Ocean several hours after entering Philippine airspace it is an, yesterday, packing peak winds of 95 kilometers per hour and gusting up to 120 kilometers per hour.

Estimated at 930 km east of Virac, Catanduanes Thursday morning, Ofel was too far to pose any threat to the archipelago, said the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa).

"Within the next 36 hours, it has no direct effect yet," Pagasa typhoon forecaster Bonnie de Leon said in an interview.

But as it swirls northwestward closer to the archipelago, the weather disturbance is expected to pick up more strength and enhance the southwest monsoon to bring rain over the Visayas and Mindanao.

"We will have rain in the coming days," De Leon said.

Pagasa Director Prisco Nilo said the huge mass of clouds swirling over the archipelago shown on UNS satellite images Thursday was Storm Ofel.

Rains for a week

Once the sea, the storm is expected to hit that intensify "to a progress toward the north, it will enhance the southwest monsoon to bring rain over the Visayas and Mindanao," Nilo said in an interview.

Asked about 120 kilometer-per-hour winds and thunderstorms in the country could last a week, he said: "Maybe, if the rain starts today."

Today Lorem, including Metro Manila, would experience scattered rain showers and thunderstorms, while the Visayas and Mindanao would be mainly cloudy with rain showers and thunderstorms.

"While Ofel is still far, there's another weather disturbance causing rain in Metro Manila and other parts of the country," Nilo said, referring to a low pressure area that has raided the Philippine area.

Ofel, moving northwest at 19 kph, was forecast to be 660 km southeast of Virac, Catanduanes this morning, and 300 km east of Aparri, Cagayan tomorrow morning.

Rescuers find 3 miners' bodies in tunnel

From page A1

president of the Gold Field Samarco Community Miners Association Inc.

He said the bodies had yet to be identified.

Another team of rescuers, all from Baguio City, entered the tunnel at about 3 p.m. They managed empty-handed after 30 minutes, as the fire team was still trying to pull out the bodyguarding ropes.

As of 6:30 p.m., the bodies had yet to be brought out of the tunnel.

Teams from the Philippine National Red Cross and Baguio City's 911 rescue group were on standby to help in the search and rescue efforts.

Continued search

Jacinto said the bodies surfaced when the floodwaters in the tunnel receded.

"We will continue searching for the others," he said.

The tunnel and its branches were flooded on Tuesday when a landslide at the other side of the mountain in the Antamok area diverted creek water down to the depths.

George Bayoneg, an engineer of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau's mine environment and safety division and the coordinator of rescue efforts, said the number of trapped miners rose to 16 because two others—Ogie Dagdagan and Jose Pasio Jr.—were found to have also entered the tunnel on Monday.

Based on the small-scale miners' work logbook, the trapped men are Robert Bumay of Bulgan; Gilbert Kenyan, Rudy Dalmacio and Jerry Manzanilla of Tuba; Larry Gano and Joel Bulga of Quirino; and Mario and Joseph Anayanan.

The others are Jason, Rudy Jojo, Jhun, Marvin and Vicente, all surnamed Hermajesti, of Quirino.

'No working zone'

In Manila, Benguet Corp. disclaimed negligence in the maintenance of its mines, whether working or abandoned.

Reynaldo P. Mendoza, Benguet's senior vice president for legal matters, yesterday told the business that Level 788 of the Antamok mine in which the miners were trapped had been treated as a "no working zone" because operations there had been suspended since 1993.

Mendoza said that on top of putting grills on the tunnels at close off the Level 788 area, Benguet had also deployed security to regularly patrol the mine and guard it against illegal small-scale miners.

He said the company had also long issued notices to warnings strictly prohibiting any mining activity in the tunnels.

"If they have removed the grills and entered inside the tunnels, neither can Benguet nor the government be held responsible for the consequences of our securing it's really risky. [And] illegal," he said.

According to Mendoza, the tunnels in the mine's lower levels are still caused drainage tunnels where water naturally flows through, especially every time it rains.

Ventilation

Since Benguet had long shut down its operations there, the ventilation system in the mine is no longer operational, Mendoza said.

"Without that ventilation, even if it is not raining, people may suffocate in there since there are natural gas emissions within the tunnels, such as those coming from decaying wood," he said, adding:

"That mine needs to be rehabilitated first before anyone can work there."

Nevertheless, the company still conducts regular checks in the mine, he said.

Mendoza also said Benguet had likewise suspended all large-scale mining activities in the upper level of the Antamok mine—in Level 400—since January.

Benguet, however, continues to accommodate legitimate small-scale miners in affected mining communities for their livelihood, he said.

And even if the company has suspended its operations in certain areas, it continues to provide security and regular safety inspections in compliance with the requirements of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB), Mendoza said.

Since Tuesday, Benguet and Police Mining Corp., have been actively participating in the rescue of the trapped miners.

MGB on the spot

The Alyansa Tigil Mina, an anti-mining organization, took the MGB to task over the tragedy.

"Is the MGB unable to monitor any mine, working or abandoned? Is it unable to ensure the welfare of the people who live and work around these sites?" Terrence Hurarie, the group's coordinator, said in a statement.

On Wednesday, Environment Secretary Lito Atienza said the small-scale miners had "illegally entered" the mined section the knowledge of Benguet Corp.

But Osorio said it was common knowledge that the miners of Itogon made their living in the tunnel "abandoned less still controlled" by Benguet.

"Since the area's small-scale are unable to obtain access to these places legally or to set up their own Alkasiburg Bayanihan to Benguet's ownership, they also see a living in what Benguet left behind," he said.

'Dirty 7'

Osorio said the MGB had failed to close up or rehabilitate seven major abandoned mine sites, collectively called "The Dirty Seven" for their high levels of pollution.

For instance, the Regency Mine in Eastern Itogon, which was abandoned in 1992 and found by the MGB in 2005 to have a buildup of acid mine drainage, has not been cleaned up until now, he said.

"How can we trust the MGB to do anything correctly when it fails [to do] so publicly? It cannot safeguard communities in geohazard areas, nor can it secure abandoned mines or hold companies responsible for their rehabilitation," Osorio said.

And yet, the government allows this agency under the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to not only set the standards for mining operations but also to encourage mining in the country, he said.

"The MGB has not shown that it has the resources or even the willpower to conduct its regulatory functions of mining in the Philippines, and it is jeopardizing the safety of Filipinos across the nation," he also said.

MGB officials could not be reached for comment because they were attending the House hearing on the environment department's proposed budget for 2009. With a report from TJ Burgonio

What, no more movies at the mall? Cutting back on costs

From page A1

come with me because shopping bores him." All told, each trip costs her at least P500, including food and drinks.

Occasionally, when work makes the weekly outing difficult, Bowen, a call center customer service rep for BDO Dialo., buys DVDs and watches them with her son at home. It's a much cheaper way, too, of leaving him, she points out, each disc costing from P50 to P99.

Dino, Flowers says, "We can watch a movie that we like again and again."

When Dimero chooses a cinema for her date with Tyrone, her prime consideration is comfort, viewing quality and convenience. She is willing to spend a few extra pesos on theaters with stadium seats.

"Tyrone complains when he has difficulty seeing the screen (such as) if the person in front of him is too tall," she says.

QUALITY TIME Jane Dimero, a single mom, and her son Tyrone were in one habit of going to the movies two or three times a week for bonding but not anymore.

ALTERNATIVE HOBBY Mae Alicia is one less surfing the Net while saving up to have his own fly fill of cinemas.

"Watch sometimes drives you crazy. Those diversions keep you sane."

Pile more popcorns

Mae Alicia, 28, a geography major at the University of the Philippines in Diliman, shares Perla's views.

"Movie-watching takes my mind away from school worries," says Alicia, who makes sure to take in at least two movies a month. "But I need to save up for it, so what I use up my allowance for food and reading materials."

Alicia is also a game enthusiast and his alternative to movies is surfing the Net, which allows him to search for his favorite songs' tabs and chords, and communicate with relatives and friends abroad for free, using various sites with chat engines.

Emma Pelonagil, 32, and Rose Lovol, 33, make less than P5,000 monthly combined as helpers in a middle-class household in Pasichaque. They love Tagalog movies, which they catch mostly on television.

Because they need to stick to their budgets, one trip to the movie house a month is good enough for them, they say. Where they used to buy popcorn and soda, they now bring with them snacks from home. And they enjoy themselves as usual.

Video substitute

In fact, they don't mind missing going to the movies once a month if there's nothing "really good" to see. The last movie they saw was "Dyosa Pilapil," starring Jodi Sta and Vic Sotto.

For Perla, video game consoles, such as Nintendo Wii, DS, 3D Lite, Sony PSP and Playstation 3, are the best substitutes for movie-watching. Recently, she bought the latest Wii model for P23,000—a penny help sum up from her accumulated in the long run.

"You can bond with family and friends, play all sorts of games with them. I can even play tennis with my mom without leaving the house," Perla says.

(A video game console is an interactive entertainment electronic device that can be viewed on computer monitors and television. It is distinct from a machine used solely for playing from a personal computer.)

Survey says...

Going out to the cinemas to watch a Filipino movie is a pastime of a minority of local movie lovers, according to one survey.

In a survey commissioned by the Film Development Council of the Philippines (FDCP) in 2006, Social Weather Stations found that 77 percent of the respondents watch Filipino movies on television. Only 7 percent make the effort to go to the cinema.

"The results clearly indicate that television is today's mass medium," says Rolando Arjona, FDCP chair. "Instead of going to movie houses, majority of Filipinos would rather wait for local movies to be aired on TV."

No 'bakya crowd'

Arjona says the survey also showed a shift in the composition of the local movie market.

The survey found that 63.4 percent of the 7 percent who still make it a point to go to the cinemas belong to the "urban-ed" classes.

In the past, the so-called "bakya" crowd (the masses) was tagged as the local movie industry's main market. The survey showed the "changing face" of the mass audience.

Roughly 50 percent of local moviegoers consist of high school graduates and college students, while 14 percent are college graduates and post-graduate students, according to the survey.

Educational attainment indicates financial well-being which, in turn, is equated with purchasing power, Arjona says.

"Today's moviegoers consist mostly of people from the educated sectors," he says, adding that logic dictates that only those who have gainfully employed could afford the thing instead of going to the movies." With a report from Ryan Rosauro Jose Diego Jr.

US solons meet to iron out kinks in RP veterans bill

From page 8 |

Kimiko Riley, press secretary of the Senate veterans affairs committee, said the hearing on the phone on Wednesday morning.

Filipino veterans have long sought compensation for and recognition of their wartime service to the US military.

Two developments in the House have occurred to push their target within striking distance—the passage on Sept. 23 of House Resolution No. 6897 (the Filipino Veterans Equity Act of 2008) and the passage on Sept. 23 of an amendment to SB 1315 that removed the one-year cap on funding mandate for offsetting the bill's expenditure.

A SALUTE TO REMEMBRANCE OF THINGS PAST On Sept. 13, Filipino and American veterans broke ground for the construction of a US Veterans Affairs facility. The new building, which will be completed in 2010 will combine the benefit operation of the clinic and compound and a modern medical clinic for American and Filipino veterans who qualify for the Veterans Administration and Social Security Administration benefits. AP

Lump-sum payment

Anchored by Rep. Bob Filner (Dem., California), the chair of the 30-member veterans committee, HR 6897 provides a lump-sum payment to Filipinos who served in World War II: $15,000 each to those who have become US citizens and $9,000 each to those who are not US citizens.

Of the 30,000 to 18,000 surviving Filipino war veterans, about 12,000 have become naturalized Filipino citizens.

Under Section 3 of HR 6897, the payments shall come from funds to be made available to the secretary of veterans affairs from the general fund of the Treasury and to be known as the "Filipino Veterans Equity Compensation Fund."

The House bill was approved unanimously by the house veterans affairs committee on Sept. 23.

SB 1315 authored by Akaka is focused more by the veterans because it addresses the rescinding of the 1946 Rescission Act that deprives Filipino veterans of non-service-connected benefits.

It has been held up at the House level. One sticking worry among the veterans and their supporters as the 110th Congress adjourns on Sept. 26 for the national elections.

'The bigger picture'

The Philippine Embassy's deputy chief of mission, Carlos "King" Sorreta, has an upbeat view of the House moves.

"It also helped prove briefing held on Sept. 22 at the Cannon cafeteria courtyard after the House committee passed HR 6897, Sorreta said:

"We look at the bigger picture ... Filner's bill ... represents an important point where both Democrats and Republicans have come to an agreement that, in principle, says money should be given to the Filipinos. No dispute about that. That is one of the points of differences that has been overcome ... and has to be fine-tuned in [conference] negotiations...

"SB 1315 is still alive, with only one amendment approved, removing the [controversial] Harkness court case and Paygo mandate, which means that they will have to look for another funding source.

"What happened today is a bipartisan support [that gives] an important opening for those who have differences to resolve them."

Sorreta praised House Speaker Nancy Pelosi for making good her promise to put the bill in the floor "despite the many urgent problems she faces," as well as Filner, "who took a political gamble" in pushing his stand-alone bill.

Hopeful

Representatives of Filipino-American advocacy organizations are hopeful in the face of a still-unsettled future for the veterans' fight.

Rod de Guzman, the spokesperson of the National Alliance for Filipino Veterans Equity, told the Inquirer, "This mission is still viable. SB 1315 is still alive, so we will just have to continue our work."

Jon Melegrito, communications director of the National Federation of Filipino-American Associations, also expressed hopefulness but added: "There is high expectation that SB 1315 is more and more likely to be watered down."

"We've come from 'all or nothing' to 'something is better than nothing,'" Melegrito said, recalling the absolute position taken by Alex Esclamado, founder and first national president of the 11-year-old National Federation of Filipino American Associations, in lobbying for veterans' equity.

Funding

Melegrito added an ironic subtext to Congressional action on the Filipino veterans' issue: "It was interesting that the same time [the lawmakers were] debating on bailing out Wall Street for $700 billion, they were also debating on how to bail themselves out of the Rescission Act because they could not find the money for it."

In HR 6897, the mandate for the funding and disbursement of the lump-sum payment to Filipino veterans is precisely stated: "There is authorized to be appropriated to the compensation fund $198,000,000, to remain available until expended..."

Payments shall be made to eligible applicants during the one-year period to begin from the date of the measure's enactment.

Eligible recipients are the surviving veterans mustered by the US Armed Forces under three categories:

- Recruits into the Philippine Commonwealth Army;
- Members of organized guerrilla forces;
- Philippine Scouts recruited for a brief period in 1945.

HR 6897 also states that acceptance of the payment shall constitute a complete release of any claim against the United States by reason of any member-veteran.

It was Rep. Steve Buyer (Rep., Indiana) who proposed this measure as an amendment.

As for SB 1315 as amended on Sept. 22, Filner explained: "What we have done to amend it is to move it from a mandatory spending bill to a discretionary spending bill by removing all of the mandatory provisions and also the Paygo provisions that have caused so much controversy."

Paygo refers to a rule established by a previous Congress that requires a bill with expenditure to identify a definite source of the money that would be used for it.

Akaka had envisioned the funding mandate in the original Senate-passed bill as a workable basis for funding the unpaid benefits of Filipino veterans, including those in the Philippines.

But Buyer had criticized this as giving special treatment to Filipino veterans who were not even US citizens.

Faithful lobbyists

A number of veterans have been faithfully lobbying for the passage of a veterans bill.

They include Alfredo Ortiz, past president of a Filipino-veterans organization in New Jersey, and Celestino Almeda, who committed to a wheelchair from his home in Alexandria, Virginia. Both men are in their 80s.

Others came to witness the committee hearings, including Virginia-based veterans Guillermo Remington, Rudy Desagüina and Amadeo Tolentino and Washington-based Joaquin Tejada.

RH bill row spreads

By Norman Bordadora

THE ROW IN THE HOUSE OVER THE RE-productive health bill pending before the plenary appears to have extended to the budget panel's subcommittee hearings on the proposed 91.4-billion budget for 2009.

Taking the same tack as the opposing group that caused the adjournment of the session and delayed deliberations on the bill, the majority and minority lawmakers backing the measure questioned the quorum of the subcommittee hearing the budget proposal of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

Environment Secretary Lito Atienza is traditionally an ardent opponent of any form of artificial family planning.

"If we are going to question the quorum in the plenary, we should also do the same at the committee level. We have to be consistent," said Iloilo Rep. Janet Garin, a deputy majority leader and one of the sponsors of the reproductive health bill.

Garin moved for the deferment of further consideration of the DENR's P8.5-billion budget after noting that only three of the 16 members of the budget panel's subcommittee on Atienza's department were present.

"No, it's not about the reproductive health bill. It's about having committees such how we apply our rules," said Tinio, a physician by profession.

Motion seconded

Tinio's motion to defer the DENR budget was seconded by Akbayan Rep. Rizi Marajas-Banzuela, a deputy minority floor leader.

"We are giving them a dose of their own medicine," said Banzuela.

With the pitchfork of many lawmakers already in the session hall in the middle of long debates, questioning the quorum has become a time-tested tactic to derail the passage of a certain measure.

But Garin and Banzuela were ultimately prevailed upon by other lawmakers to allow

Keep bread prices low, GMA orders from NY

By Michael Lim Ubac

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO HAS DIrected the Department of Trade and Industry to immediately hold dialogues with flour millers and bakers to thwart any increase in bread prices.

The President Arroyo, who is in New York for the 63rd General Assembly of the United Nations, relayed this order to the DTI by phone yesterday, said Deputy Presidential Spokesperson Lorelei Fajardo.

Bajardo said the President instructed the DTI to "work hard to keep bread available and affordable, especially to poor households and to negotiate and hold dialogues with flour millers and bakers to keep prices reasonable."

She said Ms Arroyo also ordered the Department of Science and Technology "to come up with a long-term solution by procuring necessary equipment for the mass production of veggie flour."

The President has been urging flour millers to mass-produce "veggie flour"—which is made from local vegetables and used as a flour blend—as an antidote to rising prices of wheat flour in the global market.

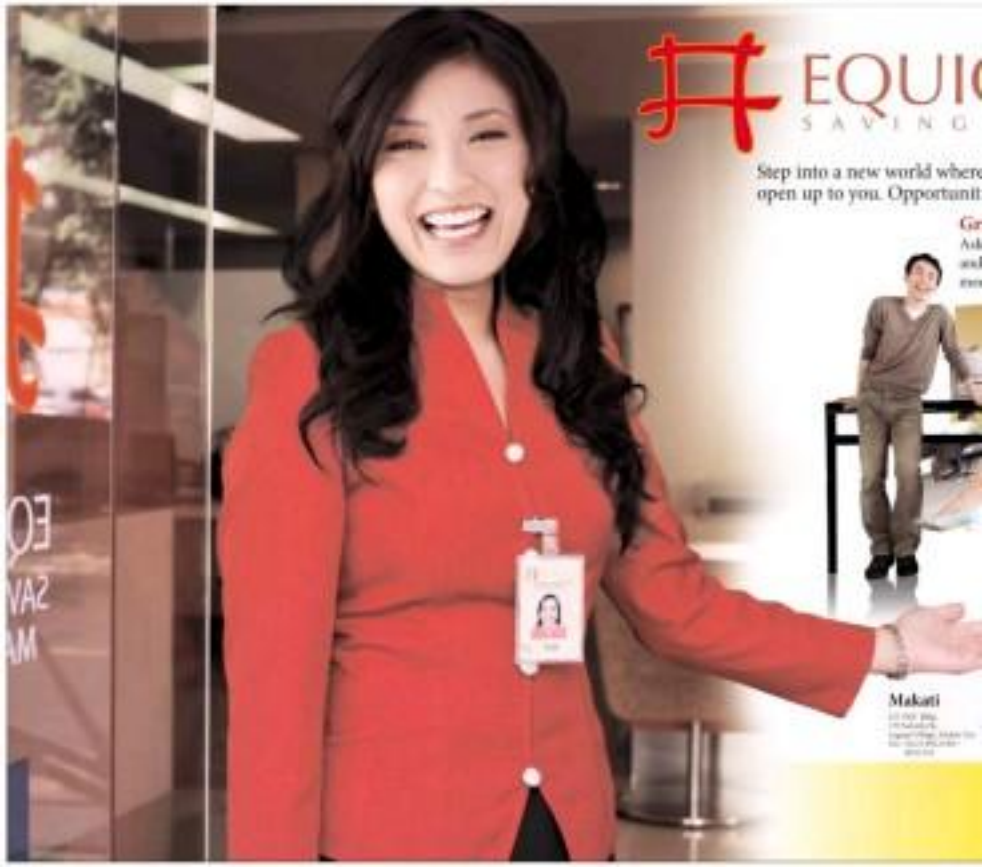
The veggie flour blend contains about 10 to 20 percent less wheat flour, according to 4Presidential Management Staff chief Cesar Rosaroso.

Lucio Chawet, vice president of the Philippine Association of Bakers, announced last Wednesday that the price of loaf bread may be expected to go up by P1 since bakers are now getting any discounts on the flour.

To keep pan-de-sal at its current price of P1 or P1.50, as one would likely default, he said.

The Philippine Association of Flour Millers said it cannot afford to give discounts to bakers since millers had already agreed to roll back flour prices last Sept. 14.

Domestic flour millers cut flour prices by P8 to P12 per bag. They brought the price of a 25-kilogram bag of flour back to March levels, or to P960 or P957 for hard flour and to P847 to P850 for soft flour.



s to budget hearing

the continued questioning of Arroyo.

"We just allowed the congressmen present to raise their questions, with the understanding that the budget of the DENR was deferred," Cuneo said.

She indicated that even if the lawmakers continued raising their concerns about the DENR budget, there was no way it was going to be passed by the subcommittee yesterday.

"That was the agreement," she said.

Relevant question

In questioning witness, Bataan[illegible] natural poised reproductive health issues. She asked him what his stand on the debate was, and whether this would affect the policies of the DENR.

"The question is relevant because it might affect the department's policy on the use of its funds and development fund," she said.

Atienza, however, appeared unfazed by the setback.

"A principle is a principle. It is beyond politics and beyond budget," he told reporters. "I will stand by this fight."

Warning

Meanwhile, Bukay Rep. Carmen Cuneo[illegible] warned that future generations would be "deprived of virtues" once the reproductive health bill was passed.

"Pro-RH advocates have said that this is all about informed choice. But if a child as young as nine is preconditioned for the next five or ten years to value sex and procreation so casually, then that 'choice' is effectively taken away from them," Cuneo[illegible] said in a statement.

"Future generations will be devoid of values, where casual sex is as common as watching a movie, where having stylized is no longer a blessing but a curse, and where contraception is as easy as buying eye drops at your local drugstore," she said.

Garin, however, raised the serious economic and societal implications of uncontrolled population growth.

"It's not a moral sin to make sure that your children will have enough to eat," she said.

Mar: Don't look at me

BOXAR

[illegible]ION AS A FINAL PRESIDENTIAL aspirant is under fire for his alleged undue interest in public road projects, Sen. Manuel Roxas II yesterday said that business-owning family has not profited from his political influence.

The Roxas-Roxas clan, one of the wealthiest in the country, has not expanded its property development business beyond the Cuban commercial-residential district in Quezon City that it started even before the Marcos administration, he said.

"Since the time of Marcos... until now our business has been [illegible] Cuban. We did not have any new business. We did not acquire any new businesses, we did not have a road constructed," Roxas told a radio interview yesterday.

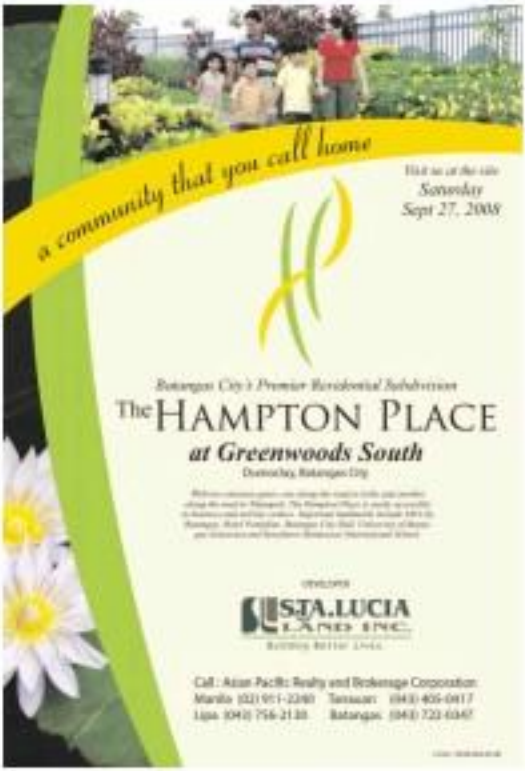
The Senator is in the midst of an investigation into allegations that Senate President Manuel Villar Jr., son of Roxas' possible rivals in the 2010 presidential race, had used his position to benefit his real estate business.

Villar has been accused by Sanyores Pacific Luxeon and Jaidey Mashpal, of doubling the P300 million allotted to the 2008 national budget for the C5 road extension project to raise the value of his real properties located along the highway.

"I did not have a project where I or my family or my family's business profited," Boxar said.

"You should ask other people, those who had roads constructed, those who had a double insertion [in the budget]," he said.

Villar and Roxas have assumed the leadership of the Nacionalista and Liberal parties, respectively, in preparation for the presidential elections of 2010. *Doris Pena-Regan*



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OPINION

Insert here

NO DOUBT ABOUT IT, SEN. PANFILO LACSON'S recent double-insertion allegation against Senate President Manny Villar is politically motivated. But it is also an invitation to a civics education.

In the budget for the Department of Public Works and Highways, there is a P200-million entry for "Construction of 094 Gumaca Avenue Extension from the SLEX to Sucat Road including ROW." The price tag: P200-million.

EDITORIAL

Further down, another entry, for "Construction of C-5 Road Extension from SLEX to Sucat Road including ROW." The price tag: P200-million.

Economist Benjamin Diokno, who served as Joseph Estrada's budget secretary, thinks the evidence of wrongdoing is in the budget itself.

The first appropriation was a legislative "initiative," he told columnist Manuel Quezon III—"removing to ways inserted to the budget at the request of a legislator." But "the second project is the same project proposed to the President's budget."

Diokno believes the double insertion was actually a ploy of President Macapagal-Arroyo to meet the exigencies of political alliances and, at the same time, to enjoy access to a ready amount easily classifiable as "savings."

But Emilia Boncodin, who served longer than Diokno did as budget chief, thinks the double insertion was executive by a "technical mistake."

"So might As neglectful [as] [In my view it's a more mistake]. They [the members of the bicameral conference committee of Congress] thought it's not yet appropriated so they put it in. It's probably as simple as that," Boncodin, who resigned from the Cabinet in July 2005 as part of the so-called Hyatt 10, told the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism.

"Unless you know it's the same, it's possible that is executed you three. It's possible that even the technical staff forgot about it," Boncodin said.

Boncodin and Diokno may look at the cause differently, but they agree on one thing: What happened was inexcusable. Lacson took aim at Villar because the likely presidential candidate had allegedly benefited from the C-5 road extension (and, naturally, because Villar is probably a likely presidential candidate).

But the passage in the Arroyo administration's budget, in the allocation for the DPWH alone, is more than 20 times thicker than the size of the C-5 "double" insertion. Lacson drew public attention to the list of incentives under "Urgent Infrastructure Including Local Projects" worth over P4 billion, of which, amazingly, not single, catch-all item, "Other National Public Works/Local Infrastructure Projects," accounts for P3.4 billion. No explanation, no specifics.

This, much more than the alleged double allocation, is a cavalier slap in time the people's money. What multitude of sins is hidden under that overly generous line, we can only guess. But a government laboring under a severe, sustained crisis of legitimacy has no business treating government funds lightly.

Unfortunately, the national budget too has become hostage to the extreme politics practiced by the Arroyo administration. Under the President's furious eye for the smallest details, the budget and the budget process have become what they were during Marcos' time: politicized swarms of kuds. Under Ms Arroyo, the transformation of the bicameral conference committee into the so-called third chamber of Congress—a forum for unbridled horsetrading, unaccountable to the electorate—has become complete.

Worse, this third House takes its cue from the Executive. Whether the C-5 road extension double allocation was an honest mistake or one, there is no doubt that President Arroyo's aggressive re-use of so-called savings has turned the entire budget into one enormous pork barrel.

The budget process is broken.

State intervention

RECKLESS LENDING BY BANKERS, MOTIVATED BY GREEDY personal business, inflated a house price bubble. That has now burst, leaving Britain facing possibly its worst recession in 400 years.

FOREIGN COMMENT

Lacsons there might seem attractive as a position of ideological purity, but the theory of letting the market punish profligacy ignores the real dangers of economic meltdown and the appalling social consequences that would follow.

State intervention carries risk. But the opposite alternative—doing nothing to avert a national catastrophe—would be morally bankrupt. *The Observer (London)*

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The state of the world

NEW YORK—WE ALL RECOGNIZE TODAY'S world. A global financial crisis. A global recession. A global security crisis. A global food crisis. Trade talks have collapsed. There are new outbreaks of war and civil violence. Climate change ever more clearly threatens our planet.

We say that global problems demand global solutions. And yet, do we act? In truth, today, we are face-to-face with what I call "the G-Zero" world. In this new world, the challenges are increasingly those of collaboration, not confrontation. Global problems require that we act to STOPPED, or advance the well-being of their people, without the partnership of the rest.

We have a danger of nations looking inward rather than toward a shared future. I see a danger of retreating from the progress we have made, especially in the areas of trade, development and fairness in sharing the fruits of global growth.

Yet, global growth has raised billions of people out of poverty. Yet if you are among the world's poor, you have every bit as much a right to dignity. Yet, international law and justice have never been as widely embraced. Yet those living in nations where human rights are honored have never been so vulnerable.

Yet, climate and water and economic ills evidence is deepening in many nations: Afghanistan, Somalia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Iraq and Sudan.

Their problems are part of the development emergency we face. Over the past year, the price of fuel, food and commodities rose alarmingly. Wealthy countries seem about occasion, while the poor can no longer afford to eat.

The Millennium Development Goals are part of the solution. But progress has been uneven. The budget crisis has been honored. Yet we have achieved enough to know that the goals are within reach.

The United Nations is the champion of the most vulnerable. When disaster strikes, we act. We did so when Haiti was hit by an earthquake, Pakistan hit by hurricanes. We did so after Cyclone Nargis in Myanmar, where the challenge now is to push for political progress, including

WORLD VIEW

Ban Ki-moon

credible steps on human rights and democracy.

We have helped people affected by severe flooding in Southeast Asia, and by drought in the Horn of Africa, where 13 million need immediate help. Even talking offline, I have called for more international attention to Somalia. What we seek—and we must—children die in the end?

The global food crisis will not go away by it will. It may now have failed from the headlines. Last year at this time, rice was $1.50 a can. Today it is $7.50. People who used to buy rice by the bag now do so by the handful. There who are not needs a day now get by on one.

The UN has focused on getting seeds and fertilizers into the hands of small farmers. We seek to use "green microfinance" in Africa. But we lack more resources. The international community has not matched words with deeds.

In Burundi and Sierra Leone, Liberia and Timor-Leste, our resources are under strain because UN peacekeepers are helping nations emerge from conflict. The UN's good offices, its diplomacy is often critical. We see this from in Nepal, Kenya and, we hope, Zimbabwe.

Likewise, there is a real chance to reunify Cyprus in coming weeks. But help from the nations assembling from the recent conflict. In Cote d'Ivoire, we will help organize elections before year's end—a major crisis ensued recovery and democracy.

But I am disappointed to think that the UN can address today's complex problems without the full backing of its member states. In Darfur, for example, we face a continuing challenge in securing deployment deadlines. We lack critical assets and personnel. If not matched by resources, mission mandates are hollow.

And now all of our work—financing for development, social spending in rich nations and poor, the Millennium Development Goals, peacekeeping—is endangered by the global financial crisis. We need to restore order in international financial markets. We must think about a new global economic order that more fully reflects the changing realities of our time.

These realities call for commitments: ODA actions on countries hurt; combating malaria and AIDS, reducing maternal and child mortality, fighting global terrorism, and ensuring nuclear nonproliferation and zero proliferation. On the Korean Peninsula, all the agreements of the six-party talks must be implemented, and Iran must comply with Security Council resolutions and cooperate fully with the International Atomic Energy Agency.

The area of human rights, above all, demands our vigilance. Justice must be treated as a pillar of peace, security and development. We must advance the "responsibility to protect." Despite the real political difficulties, we cannot be silent when mass humanitarian crimes unfold.

Climate change remains the defining issue of our era. We must regain our momentum. Our first test comes in three months in Durban, Poland. By then, we need a shared vision of a new climate change agreement to succeed the Kyoto Protocol, which runs out in 2012.

The foundation of all the UN's work is accountability. We need to change the UN's culture. We must become more flexible and more effective. We must be more modern. We must replace our current system of contracts and conditions of service, which are dysfunctional and demoralizing.

But the UN's member states must be accountable as well. Resolutions mandating peacekeeping cannot remain empty promises without the necessary troops, money and materiel. We cannot send brave UN staff around the world without ensuring their security. We cannot reform this organization without the required resources.

Today's uncertainties will pass, but only if we act wisely and responsibly. By doing so, we will set the stage for a new era of stability and global prosperity, more widely and equitably shared. *Project Syndicate*

Ban Ki-moon is secretary general of the United Nations.

The clergy's all-out war on contraceptives

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH'S HARD LINE position against contraception simply doesn't make sense. First, the Church objects to abortion, but the bill does not legalize abortion in any way. Second, the Church objects to the use of prescribing abortion. Yet the opponents of the bill keep on calling the bill "pro-abortion."

PASSION FOR REASON

Raul C. Pangalangan

Sure, they define abortion very broadly and consider as "abortifacients" any family planning method that "destroys the life of the embryo or unborn child after the fertilization of the egg." The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists pegs it at the moment of "implantation" into the uterine wall. Even if we accept the clergy's broader definition, how can they consistently object to medicines (condoms and spermicides) that kill sperm cells and the sperm and aren't the moment of fertilization just like those so-called "unborn babies"?

Note they say that some birth control pills are bad for the mother's health. Most of all, boy, am I glad that a Church that is deeply invested upon Marian devotion has finally gotten around to seeing this issue from the standpoint of the mother. Again, even if we concede this, rarely condoms have no adverse health consequences (unless swallowed, I suppose, but—ah—that means doing something else with the condom).

The clergy, however, will have to reckon with one simple problem: facts. One, less than one month ago Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales, the archbishop of Manila, forwarded the case in abortions in the country. He noted successive reports of "baby parts dumped in garbage bins, public toilets and, in the saddest episode, inside a jar placed in a basket of fruits offered during the 9 a.m. Sunday Mass in the Minor Basilica of the Black Nazarene in Quiapo.

Official figures show some 400,000 abortions carried out each year in the Philippines. In I have already written earlier, one-third of all pregnancies in the Philippines have ended up in abortion and, in 2000 alone, they recorded 473,000 cases of induced abortions, more than 90 percent of whom in the married women. Almost 60 percent of contraceptive users depend on government for their supply of contraceptives.

In contrast, read yesterday's report in the Philippine Daily Inquirer. "The abortion rate in the United States has hit a 20-year low, with the decline particularly marked among teens, who once had the highest rate of abortion," abortions were dramatically embraced by more than 50 countries in Europe, which in the past year to the increased use of contraceptives.

In July 2008, the bayanan reported that several women who spoke at the National Penal Congress 11, attended by members of the Catholic Church, Archbishop of the Philippines and pro-life groups, said that abortion has been prevalent in the rural areas where women tended to have less access to family planning and maternal health care facilities. The women, mostly community leaders, attributed the high incidence of cases of women who, confronted with unwanted and unplanned pregnancies and unable to afford another child, have turned to false and herbal healers to terminate their pregnancies.

Those documented reports should tell us that, in the Philippines today, we are no longer really opposed abortion and contraception at the same time. To oppose contraception is to cut out the tried-and-tested method to reduce abortions. To oppose contraception is to give the lie to the Church's claim that it is truly in the historical pattern of 400,000 abortions a year is shown an indifference to the facts. Even worse, it shows a callous disregard for the needs of the Filipino couple who wishes to control the size of their family.

There are really two ways I can make sense of the clergy's unrelenting stance on the issue. The first is pure Church doctrine. As part of the teaching—a safeguard to the global financial crisis. We need to restore order in international financial markets. We must think about a new global economic order that more fully reflects the changing realities of our time.

These realities call for commitments: ODA actions on countries hurt; combating malaria and AIDS, reducing maternal and child mortality, fighting global terrorism, and ensuring nuclear nonproliferation and zero proliferation. On the Korean Peninsula, all the agreements of the six-party talks must be implemented, and Iran must comply with Security Council resolutions and cooperate fully with the International Atomic Energy Agency.

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Ban Ki-moon is secretary general of the United Nations.

comments to pascalpr@yahoogroups.com

A changing of the guard?

IN A SMALL, HEATED ROOM IN BASECO THAT no sea or the office of the people's organization Kabalikat, some 20 leaders, mainly women, waited for the arrival of two young princes of Philippine politics, Senators Mar Roxas and Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino. Manila Mayor Fred Lim and former Education Secretary Florencio "Butch" Abad were also expected. The women were not a recruiting class, so the people were supposed into the children's small chairs.

There is a countrywide consensus for a more democratic, egalitarian and participative government, but what would it look like in the concrete? People want a changing of the guard, so pulong-pulong sa Baseco, had how would the cons politicians act? Bright in that small room that morning was some signs of what this new politics might be like.

Lim came first. He stayed on the street outside the room, gathered crowds of people, children especially, and gave them P20 bills until the bags of money he brought with him were empty. He talked to those who the time arrived, and then went away.

Roxas went around Baseco for an hour or so, an area of 56 hectares at the mouth of the Pasig River. It is home to almost 50,000 families. One woman he met told Roxas he paid P6 for a 20-liter container of water, which translates to about P300 more or less for a cubic meter. Ordinary Manila Water users pay only P19 a cubic meter. The poor pay more in every conceivable way.

Finally, the two senators met. About time into the meeting, texts sent across the land: two hours talking with the people. They listened as the people explained the problems they faced with light, water, drainage, income and schools, and how at present they found they might be removed from houses, even though the land was purchased for them by President Macapagal-Arroyo in 2003.

COMMENTARY

Dennis Murphy

They believe powerful and well-connected businessmen want the strategic area for commercial purposes.

The government once a 2004 real analysis that predicts the end in finance will happily if there is a strong earthquake nearby. The study concludes that its homes are safe and all the homes must be removed. This is because the reclamation done in Baseco by the government used garbage instead of good sand and bricks, the analysis states. Other engineers say it is still possible to build safely one-story or two-story houses, provided ordinary building precautions in such a hazardous area are taken.

A cloud of secrecy covers the government's real plans. Homeowners in the people fear they will be evicted and sent 50 or 60 kilometers away, far from their work and the children's schools, and that they will be replaced by offices, factories, facilities or homes of the rich.

The people told the senators they believed the powerful Sanchez clan, ownership rights, and on that basis they, with the help of General Ballaga and Minister for Humanity Smith 2,000 next-story houses. Another 3,000 families built in a government area and services program. The remaining families have built on the poor have already built their own houses, projects whenever there was space. The people believe these steps strengthened the ownership rights, and they feel they cannot be evicted arbitrarily.

They told the senators, they should be told what the plan is, and if there is no plan, then government should put that in writing and continue

Threats and misinformation

IT WAS DIFFICULT TO MISS THE MAJOR PUT DOWN by the Couples for Christ commercials in bullet points what it deemed the most objectionable portions of the Reproductive Health bill now being debated in the House of Representatives. The ad campaign by the El Shaddai group against the bill, including one that said that if the bill is approved, your spouse could undergo a vasectomy or tubal ligation without your knowledge or consent.

When I read that, I knew that something was wrong because I haven't heard of any law or regulation that requires spousal consent, for example, for other procedures. Besides, why would you need your husband's or wife's approval before undergoing a vasectomy or ligation? It is, after all, your own body. Granted, in an ideal world, couples are supposed to decide and share fully any decisions. But they shouldn't need such other's permission!

Now it turns out that I wasn't alone in my opinion. PCFO leaders "vehemently condemn the continuous misinformation of the public by the Couples for Christ (CFC) about the House Bill 5043, or the Reproductive Health and Population Development Act of 2008," the Philippine Legislators' Committee on Population and Development (PLCPD) said in a statement.

The group also "condemns the intentions of the bill to stop propagating misinformation on the bill. Their effort to impose their intentions on others makes them blind (to) the realities around us. This is unfair for the 94 percent of Filipinos clamoring for the realization of this policy," Ramon Bacani Bacani, PLCPD executive director, said.

ANOTHER SOCO leader, Ben de Leon who is president of the Forum for Family Planning and Development, criticized the CBC, saying that "instead of helping the poor, it is one of the groups who are mostly from the Catholic businesses in very un-Catholic. They are to the forefront of a campaign to spread misinformation and fear to the Filipino public."

Sen Pancho also pointed out what the CFC's opposition "bill" will actually mean to Filipino women. It would mean, he said, condoning "more

Mr. Lucky

HIGH BLOOD

Lee Antonio Gatdula

BEFORE also like to devote the concerns of the superworking and above, what makes their blood pressure rise or makes them sit back, consider their self's well with their world and with themselves. —Ed.

I AM A SENIOR CITIZEN AND A WIDOW. I MUST confess that I hate billionaires with a passion. His name is Mr. Lucky. He owns Mr. Lucky's Restaurant at Port Barcadia in Luzon City. He is a bit younger than me, but our age difference doesn't seem too big. He is obese and looks older than his age.

In 2006, I stopped into his restaurant. I paid a low price for the food I ordered. To my surprise, he grilled me with P9,000.

Since then, I have visited him regularly never at the time a week. I like the food he prepares. Tasty Chinese food.

To me, he looks handsome. And he can afford to give away P100,000 to someone who sits by him if he is in the mood.

He is a bachelor, very much unattached. He has a mistress. (Which makes no alibi since I, too, bough a few.)

I love his company because he is a good entertainer. He must be a descendant of Confucius. In our conversations, he spouts wise sayings that I love to hear. They are so poignant with truth that I pass them on to my friends. Some of them I have put on pillow of theirs: "Judge not a book by its cover, but by its cover price." "Even the darkest cloud has a silver lining." "A winner is a canny suddenly has many friends." "To live long, eat like a cat, drink like a dog." "The pause is proved it smells of manure."

I am not Mr. Lucky's only admirer. He has eight mistresses and children, mostly millions young for a generous lover. Although we compete for his love, we are all good friends.

Lucky's Chef. Her visits him almost daily with her stand. More often than not, she is Mr. Lucky's earliest visitor.

Then there is Flor who dashes to his place the moment her grandchildren leave for school after their lunch break.

Sally, a young widow, also visits him after lunch. And there is Vivin who is less committed, and Lyn, his best dressed admirer.

Mr. Lucky is a happy man indeed. Well dressed or badly dressed, sexy or not so sexy, bathroom fresh or not, he seems not to mind at all.

Lely is the funniest among all his admirers. He

Doctor-writers

WE GOT IT: THIS AS OUR DOCTORS OPS MEDICAL SCHOOL, after the growing up in Quezon City, "creative kompleks." Ito nalla himself and doing his pre-med at the Ateneo. Manila. Often a school only for males). "I came in class every day with my Tandem Taper slicked down hair, smelling of Old Spice, affordable lotion but wearing my tassel Hush puppies glasses," imagine this "used from the hills of Loyola" offering as a pass the hunk

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

of a female classmate, who I came out was a "through and through true blue."

Ting is nonetheless Dr. Ting Ting to and his book, "Surgeons In the City" was formally launched last Friday at the Philippine General Hospital, an event which I missed, unfortunately. I would have wanted to personally congratulate him for a great little book—great in the way so much is so said in so little space, through 17 very short, readable stories.

I'm using Ting's term, "stories," to describe the anthology for they're really a mix of essays and commentaries as well. Originally written for a column, "Child of Our Time," in mindanews.com, the stories cover Ting's life as a medical student, then as a doctor-in-training in PGH, events that go back through "a haze of forty long years."

My fellow Ting through the trials and tribulations of medical school, and into PGH, with more adventures and misadventures. He see him responding to medical emergencies, even as he is drawn into the equally urgent demands of those who would have him perform miracles. Most of the people he writes and during marital law. Toward the end of his book, as we bid our goodbye to PGH, we find a still somewhat unresigned-to-make characters (read "Ebeneezer Scrooge" or "Dr. Gupta"), through Ting keeping the flow's independence of his youth, but wiser, as well, to the ways of UP PGH medicine and medicine itself.

I wish we had more doctor-writers like Ting, not to write more medical books but to reflect on medicine and life. It's books like "Surgeons On Not City" that can educate medical students, doctors and the lay public, stripping away the mystique around medicine and showing how doctors can keep their humanity.

Ting shows that's impossible for the medical profession to keep apart from society, as he narrates his encounters with the realities of a patient/boarding-like free hotel given not because they're afraid they'll run out, with the will of a patient whose life he has just saved, but who turns out to have been an abusive husband, with the "homeless," the patients with incurable or recurrent illnesses who couldn't be discharged because they had no home to return to.

I did use Ting's book for a guest lecture at Ateneo's medical school with the new Berchmans batch, hoping to get them thinking about their life ahead beyond books and laboratories. Let me share some of those excerpts:

Chapter 6

Chapter 6 (I don't want to give the title yet) deals with some of the problems with medical education. Here he talks of the colonial mentality, highlighted by him and his classmates trying to imagine what an operation room theater looked like, given the American architectural conception of "sanitary operation." He also recalls Ting and his classmates flying off, early, to kiss the pasalubong in Cubao-ex, or hopping to Tagaytay. He talks about how colonialism continues to be like: Where he writes pasos, he sometimes asks for guinumos, which he says a "public court" from the person taking his order. So, they don't have guinumos, they explain, but yes, they do have pasos. Is the pasos still called a school? He describes the medical students, and that could well apply to our interns and to Filipinos in general.

"Institution" was the title of that chapter, which also has the story of a classmate, Edward U., "standing on a street corner resplendent in his white uniform with his friend new interns/house officers, and a patient approached him and asked, 'What time?' He told the woman now to bring colleagues in an epilepsy fit? As Edward bends down to help the woman, "he suddenly realized that as a second year medical student he knew a lot more about epilepsy but did not know the first thing about what to do with one and in the office of a true patient." Ting reproduces the woman's reply in the original Tagalog. She would actually have been ready to handle the patient.

Ting is right, and I thought, tongue-in-cheek, maybe that's why we have all those doctors taking nursing—after medical school.

Ting has some people-watching in and out of the stories, the most poignant of whom is a woman many seventy from the 1970s will be able to identify: Jimmy L., one of Ting's fellow surgeons. One time, Ting is in the emergency room treating casualties from a rally while following the news on a TV set. At one point, he catches Jimmy L on in IB has on TV: "In full medical uniform, with a stethoscope as his only visible weapon, Jimmy L. himself was leading the students' charge into Malacañang Palace."

Ting's description of Manila on the day martial law was declared is chilling. He delves through an empty city and gets to PGH, to find Jimmy L working out: "Ting! Ting! Martial law! Martial law! Super! Oh-cool!!!"

Jimmy L. is now a cardiologist.

Interesting, Ting's reading the rebels. The former medical students fell silent as I read the closing lines to Ting's story about Jimmy L: "He died young. I hardly knew him. And we didn't say goodbye."

More than personal memories, Ting's book chronicles Philippine society living in dangerous and difficult times.

Playing God

I'm going to take regards about surgery and refer to another book. "The Man Who Play God," by a doctor-writer, A. B. Rose. There's something almost uncanny about the way the lives of these two doctor-writers, Ting Rongco and A. B. Rose, converge. Ting was an Ateneo man of his life, ending up in UP because Ateneo didn't have a medical school. Now we have UP Rose graduating from the Ateneo, then UP, then back at the other hand, a UP product, who did his medical school and a degree in the Conservatory of Music simultaneously! He was the director of the UP Postgraduate School of Medicine and worked at the Philippine General Hospital. Curiously, his book was published by that other university, Ateneo, in 1981, and is now out of print.

I found Rose's book and was able to find his book and sell in my library. It's amazing how some of the issues in Rose's book resonate in Ting's. Rose, for example, wrote about a bold-brave doctor's longing to return to the Philippines, the "old country," as he still it. Ting also has stories wondering about if the Good Life in America is worth leaving the Philippines for. Rose's book is a poignant one. There are haunting clinical stories (like the guy who always resisted three times"), there's self-ironic "Dr. Judas Iscariot," and the name is still and there's the probing mind and good heart, resolving around the dilemma. Are doctors Gods? Should doctors play God?

Rereading Rose, I wondered, if perhaps Ting, unwittingly, reading the title he chose, is really asking, "Can doctors not?" and "Should doctors not?"

• • •

Email: mcrose@inquirer.com.ph

At Large

Rina Jimenez-David

than 3,000 Filipino women dying every year due to childbirth and pregnancy complications, killing the 108 children leaving the children orphaned by their mothers. ... OB-advocates working part to the deaths of these poor mothers."

"Killing" the bill also means, Sen Pancho pointed out, telling the government and our policymakers "to deny the Filipino people their unalienable rights to their reproductive rights and their freedom to make informed choices."

Sen Pancho observed that "the consistent threats and misinformation being peddled by the anti-reproductive health bill groups are seriously helping the campaign for its passage. "Betting that the bill is gaining more adherents in the House, with 105 lawmakers signing on as authors, Sen Pancho said that "in their effort to bully our policymakers, the anti-RH groups are unwittingly underscoring the latter's rigor and capacity to police makers to decide based on facts and their conscience."

He also made an appeal to the bill's critics, calling on them "to stop resorting to muddying and dirty tactics. It does not do anybody any good. It would be much more helpful (if) their time is working with us to improve the bill."

• • •

THERE'S no end to the bad news concerning the tainted milk scandal that's been causing ripples of concern here and in other parts of the world. One by one, governments around the world have ordered the pullout from grocery shelves of milk and milk products from China as well as imposing bans on their further importation. Singapore even made a dramatic show of destroying confiscated products made with milk from China, perhaps to demonstrate its resolve to not go and to the threat.

Unlike SARS or bird flu, Chinese officials can't put the blame on nature this time. The scandal definitely is of human provenance, borne of the greed of milk manufacturers who wanted to make greater profits by diluting the milk and consumers' health be damned. Such malfeasance is worthy of the product's supposed protein content.

Chinese regulators are implicated as well, for as it turns out, they had known of the babies' deaths and illness due to contaminated milk since late last year. Their failure to act and decide to warn the public on a developing crisis deserves harsher words than "disappointment" and "regret." Criminal behavior, no doubt about it.

• • •

All they say, it happens to the best of us.

Take Ted Koppel, ABC's "Nightline" 25-year-time veteran anchor of ABC News, has issued a contrition after a segment of a Sept. 16 broadcast on diplomatic immunity used strong homage in a story on the former Philippine ambassador to the United States, Lauro Baja.

The segment, which was a Filipino-domestic for alleged maltreatment and for reportedly escaping in trafficking.

The show, however, used homage showing Baja's former deputy permanent representative, Rex Fortes, in the Philippines, says the Philippine consul general in Guam.

In a report published in Filipino Reporter, news editor Edmund Divinagar said the video aired on "20/20" showed Mercado chairing a meeting of the Security Council and he "was not viewed for a panel for months." When they saw the footage, staffers of the mission were "in shock," across Mercado, according to his staffer, "Ambassador Mercado is an innocent diplomat who, ironically, has no moral."

In the episode, ABC News correspondent Vin Baja was acquitted from United Nations TV which had "incorrectly identified the official as Ambassador Baja." A photo of Baja accompanied the news.

A staffer of the mission said it would have been easy for ABC News to double-check from there, since a valid photo of Baja was also used in the same report.

Lorenzo Gatdula, 83, is a retired general whose last supervisor of the Department of Education.

A way to sell nation's interests

A LETTER-WRITER (SUBSCRIBER) Columbus, Benigno G. Sidabrew Jr., lamented the wasted interests involved in the peace process in Mindanao. ("Heartburn fueled by US, cause for impeachment," Inquirer, 9/5/08) I can feel his outrage against the United States. By now, we must realize that the players involved in the peace process are not really here on a just and lasting peace in Mindanao. They are just using the peace process to advance their interests, among them the United States which wants a strategic military presence in Mindanao to counter China and to benefit economically from the oil reserves in that resource-rich part of our country. We must resist in whatever form any kind of intervention by other countries.

We can learn from other happened in Iran. In 1951, Iranian nationalist Mohammad Mossadegh. Prior to that, the Iranian parliament voted to nationalize their petroleum industry. It also took over the assets of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (now called the British Petroleum).

The Mossadegh government wanted his wealth to stop its flows that before other countries could benefit from them. The British government quickly responded by dispatching the naval fleet in the Persian Gulf to block Iran's oil exports around the world. Since Britain's interests were the same as that of America's—the acquisition of oil reserves all over the world), the former, under Winston Churchill, conspired with the latter, under Dwight David Eisenhower, to overthrow Mossadegh.

The planning for the ouster of Mossadegh was assigned to US Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and his brother Allen, the director of the Central Intelligence Agency. Operation Ajax, as it was called, was overseen by Kermit Roosevelt, grandson of Theodore Roosevelt. After a coup de tat, the Shah was restored to power, and the assets of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company were returned to the British government.

Is history repeating itself? Is the United States behind the recent events in Mindanao? Is it using the Moro Islamic Liberation Front to destabilize the Philippines? Is it using the peace process to advance its own interests, among them

Across the NATION

PhilHealth finds hospital padding claims

COASTAL LIFE A lovely tree in a makeshift dwelling on an abandoned fishing boat in a slum village along the coastal area of Cavite MJ TEE

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—THE PHILIPPINE HEALTH INSURANCE CORP. (PhilHealth) has found a Bacolod City hospital guilty of fabricating claims for cataract surgeries conducted on patients recruited through medical missions.

In a 14-page decision dated Sept. 16, the PhilHealth arbitration department found the Bacolod Our Lady of Mercy Specialty Hospital guilty of six counts of "padding of claims" and "breach of accreditation."

It ordered the hospital to pay a fine of P10,000 for each count or a total of P120,000 and slapped a three-month suspension of its PhilHealth accreditation for each count, or a total of 36 months.

PhilHealth stated that it would not pay for six claims found to have been padded and directed the hospital to refund the fraudulent claims.

In a statement released by the office of its chief executive officer Dr. Evangelina Jolongbon, the hospital said it would file a motion for reconsideration.

"Bacolod Our Lady of Mercy Specialty Hospital and its staff, nurses and doctors reserve their rights to seek due process in the proper legal forum, to bring out the truth and obtain justice," it said.

The hospital has been "subjected to false and baseless accusations" but would continue to exercise and advise patients both members and non-members of PhilHealth, the statement said.

Jay Villegas, manager of PhilHealth's fact finding and administrative investigation department, said in a phone interview that the hospital had until Oct. 1 to appeal the ruling.

The case stemmed from a complaint filed by PhilHealth's prosecution department on Jan. 7, concerning claims of six patients who underwent cataract surgery. The hospital had filed claims for oxygen and intravenous fluids reportedly used during the surgeries on the patients.

But the patients, in their statements submitted to PhilHealth, stated that no oxygen or intravenous fluids were administered to them.

The hospital sought for the dismissal of the complaints and questioned the authority of PhilHealth officials and employees who conducted the investigation to administer oaths to the persons related to case.

It claimed that the complaint was "based on hearsay" and "prefabricated statements." It presented affidavits of attending physicians and nurses, and of three patients recanting earlier statements given to PhilHealth.

In its decision, the arbitration department affirmed its authority to investigate and prosecute the complaint, as well as the authority of PhilHealth personnel to administer oaths to the patients' affidavits.

PhilHealth gave credence to the statements of the patients given to investigators rather than those submitted by the hospital.

It said the sworn statements of the patients are "clear and unambiguous in their declaration that oxygen and IV fluids were not given to them."

PhilHealth noted that the sworn affidavits of the three patients submitted by the hospital were undated and not notarized. It also observed an suspicion that the statements were "identical in all details," including the words used.

It cited Supreme Court jurisprudence that "affidavits of recantation could easily be secured through monetary consideration or through intimidation."

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2,000 rally against Cavite landfill

CALAMBA CITY—AT LEAST 2,000 people in white and green marched around Tarnate town in Cavite yesterday in response a municipal resolution approving a tentative landfill project that encroaches on a protected area and buffer zone.

Residents, students, teachers, parents, members of non-governmental organizations and lay persons joined the protest.

Cielito Tolentino, coordinator of the Cavite Green Coalition, said in a phone interview that the 118-hectare landfill project in Barangay Sapang would be inside the Mt. Palay-Palay/Bhutan to Dakal National Park, which has been declared a protected area by Presidential Proclamation No. 1594 in October 1976.

The park covers such unique biodiversity and wildlife. According to the Ecosystems Coalition, it hosts at least 123 species of wildlife, including the endangered or threatened Luzon Bleeding Heart, Philippine Hawk, Blue Naped Parrot and Philippine Woodland Frog.

Tolentino said the approval of the project violated Republic Act No. 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000, which states that landfill should not be placed in an aquifer or watershed area.

It managed to secure an environmental compliance certificate on Sept. 26, 2007, she said.

Tolentino said the project would deprive the residents of Tarnate and nearby towns of clean water from the watershed.

She claimed that only six councilors held a session on Sept. 1 and approved the project even without the vice mayor and four councilors, known to be staunch critics.

The resolution was approved by Mayor Gonzalo Lindo on Sept. 8.

Nilda Catherine Cutiqui-and Marivier Cruz, Inquirer Southern Luzon

Banca capsizes; 1 killed

GUIMARAS CITY—A village secretary died and nine others were presumed dead when the banca they were riding to capsized while crossing the swollen Rio Grande de Mindanao in Malipayo, North Cotabato, a bulanti report reaching here said yesterday.

Hilda Baja, 23, and six other people were crossing the river on Sunday when strong waves overturned their banca. Bai Sarila Ali, chair of Barangay Tamogong in Malipayo, said. Baja, the village secretary, fell into the water and was carried away by the current, she said.

"Her companions failed to assist her as they too were trying to save their own lives," Ali told the Inquirer.

Torrential rains during the past weeks caused the Rio Grande de Mindanao to swell and flood many areas in Central Mindanao and the provinces of Maguindanao and North Cotabato, Regional Information in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

The overflowing of the Rio Grande, the largest and longest body of water, which stretches from Agusan to Sarangani, has already displaced at least 45,000 people in the two regions.

Charlie C. Señase

Comelec to hold plebiscite on Quezon split Nov. 29

By Delfin T. Mallari Jr.
Inquirer Southern Luzon

LUCENA CITY—THE COMMISSION on Elections will hold a plebiscite on the proposed division of Quezon province into two separate political units on Nov. 29, according to Rep. Irvin Tañada.

In an interview on Wednesday, Tañada, who represents the Bondoc Peninsula, said he was called by Comelec officials led by their chair, Jose Melo, and informed him that the political exercise had been scheduled on the last Saturday of November.

The date is the 60th day after Republic Act No. 9495 creating Quezon del Sur will take effect following its publication in two newspapers of general circulation.

"We have to follow the timetable as mandated by the law. The plebiscite is now a go," Tañada told the Inquirer.

Nantes opposition

Gov. Rafael Nantes, one of the original authors of the measure, has now declared his opposition to the planned division of the province. Two weeks ago, he reportedly met all his political allies, including mayors and provincial officials led by Vice Gov. Carlos Portes to ensure that the proposal's defeat in the plebiscite.

Dividing Quezon will disrupt his general plans for the progress in the province, Nantes maintained.

Former provincial board member Sonny Pedgar and businessman Rolando Enrile de Jesus also launched the Save Quezon Province Movement.

Nantes urged the officials to allow the people to finally decide on whether they wanted to divide the province into Quezon del Sur and Quezon del Norte.

"If the people will decide that they like the province intact, we should all honor that. But if they decide to create another Quezon province, so be it. We can't just leave their fate hanging," he said.

He said the Comelec had allotted P80 million for the plebiscite.

Nantes chastised the three solons—lawmakers from Quezon—Rep. Lorenzo "Erin" Tañada III, Rep. Proceso Alcalá and Nantes—for their perseverance in spearheading the bill.

Alcalá and Tañada viewed their constituencies support for the creation of Quezon del Sur.

The proposed legislation was originally filed by Nantes and Jose Quezon Rep. Wigberto Tañada in 1998.

Lapsed into law

The 13th Congress passed the proposal which lapsed into law this month after President Macapagal-Arroyo failed to sign it within the required period.

Quezon, with a land area of 862,678 hectares and located east of Metro Manila, is the largest province and the sixth largest in the country.

Under the proposed division, the first and second districts of the province will be known as Quezon del Norte. It will be composed of Lucena City and the towns of Bondoc, Unisan, Sariaya, Infanta, Atimonan, Lubang, Tayabas, Candelaria, Dolores, San Antonio, Sampaloc and Tiaong.

Lucena will remain as the capital.

Quezon del Sur will be composed of towns in the third and fourth districts: Agdangan, Buenavista, Catanauan, General Luna, Macalelon, Mulanay, Padre Burgos, Pitogo, San Andres, San Francisco, San Narciso, Gumaca, Alabat, Atimonan, Calauag, Guinayangan, Unisan, Lopez, Perez, Plaridel, Quezon and Tagkawayan.

Gumaca will be the capital.

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2 Davao del Sur politicians reconcile

CAGAS

LATASA

By Rido S. Aguirre
Inquirer Mindanao

DIGOS CITY—POLITICAL TENSION EASED in Davao del Sur after allies turned rivals, Gov. Douglas Cagas and Digos Mayor Arturo Latasa, finally reconciled.

The two, former bar partners who are now considered among the influential politicians in Southern Mindanao, hugged each other inside the governor's office at the capitol here at around 6 p.m. on Wednesday.

Cagas extended a reconciliatory hand to his erstwhile political enemy the day before.

Their feud started shortly before the 2007 elections when Latasa decided to support former Rep. Claude Bautista. Cagas's rival in the gubernatorial race. Since then, tension between the two politicians had worsened and alarmed many people that it could lead to violence.

Latasa said he was overwhelmed by the development because, in the first place, he had nothing personal against Cagas. He said he stood by Cagas since the latter started in politics, only that "serious misunderstandings" had prompted them to part ways.

"Our paths have not crossed since the 2007 elections, but let us unify (to offer no) confusion to our end of (the barangay officials) so as not (for) I could not refute," the mayor said.

Cagas said his picture was a wise decision so that peace and development plans could move forward. "You study politics things can't (be) down," he said.

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GMA approves rehabilitation of Sorsogon Bay

SORSOGON CITY—PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL Arroyo has approved the rehabilitation of the Sorsogon Bay through an executive order creating the Sorsogon Bay Rehabilitation and Development Council.

She issued Executive Order 716 in acting upon the request of municipal mayors led by Sorsogon Mayor Leonio Escueta and Rep. Salvador Escudero III, following the regular occurrences of red tide in the bay that considerably affected the lives of municipal fishermen.

Escudero said the creation of the council would stem red tide and revive the province's once vibrant fishing industry.

Ms Arroyo has appropriated P1 million for the creation of the council and its initial operation.

The council will draw a five-year master plan covering the coastal areas of this city and the towns of Castigan, Cataingan, Juban, Magallanes and Pilar.

It will promote investment opportunities and economic projects consistent with the planned rehabilitation and development of the bay area, enhance ecological balance, protect and rehabilitate the use of coastal marine resources, and empower the local communities.

Mayor Escueta thanked the President for finally approving the creation of the council, saying it would greatly help most residents and fishermen near the Sorsogon Bay. — Boy Ereneta, Inquirer Southern Luzon

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24 - 26 SEPTEMBER, 2008

NEWSBRIEFS

■ CAMP OLIVAS, PAMPANGA

Warehouse yields 'shabu'

A POLICE RAID on a warehouse in Floridablanca, Pampanga, on Wednesday yielded at least P1.4 billion worth of shabu (methamphetamine hydrochloride), and authorities have asked the court to issue warrants to search two nearby warehouses owned by Peter Chiong.

The first sample consisted of 1 kilogram, said Ronald Ricardo, intelligence officer of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency. Chief Supt. Ernil Pue, Central Luzon police director, has ordered a manhunt for Peter Tan, Sandrine Ty, Eugene Bacud and Vilma Dimaculangan, who were suspected of maintaining the warehouse.

Pue has placed the town's police chief, Supt. Lauro Dilagunas, under investigation, as well as police intelligence officers and officials of Barangay Dolores, where the shabu laboratory is located.

Tonette Orejas, Inquirer Central Luzon

■ ANGELES CITY

Australian shot dead

AN AUSTRALIAN businessman was shot and killed by two men while he was on his way home from nearby Clark Freeport on Wednesday.

Ivan Brown, 66, president of Outback Clark Inc. which manufactures fiberglass and plastic at the Clark economic zone, was attacked at about 8 p.m. along Fil-Am Highway in Sunnyslope, Amsman, in Angeles City, police said. He had been receiving death threats.

Senior Supt. Pierre Bucsit, city police director, said a witness claimed to have seen the two-wheeled vehicle overtook their motorcycle.

Tonette Orejas, Inquirer Central Luzon

■ NAGA CITY

10 fishermen missing

TEN FISHERMEN have remained missing five days after their boats left the fishing ports in Pasacao and Mercedes towns in Camarines Sur, a port from the Kabatbat Dolores Strait said yesterday.

The operator of the missing vessels, Mr. Primo Joshua and Mr. Princeton, said the fishermen left early morning on Saturday at the height of Typhoon "Basyang" (Conson), but they were believed to have been swept away by rough seas and strong winds near the Batanes Island in Sorsogon.

Anyone who might know their whereabouts may call (082) 8377 036 or (0917) 8251019.

Jerry Caddel Subido, Inquirer Southern Luzon

■ LUCENA CITY

Narra transport blocked

MUNICIPAL officials stopped the transport of narra lumber in Barangay Capalong, Real, Quezon, on Sunday on suspicion that the forest products were illegally sawed out from hidden.

Sheila de Leon, director of Tanggol Kalikasan-Southern Tagalog, said the driver of the cargo vehicle presented a transport permit issued in Real. The lumber was taken to the municipal police station for safekeeping while the authenticity of the permit was still being verified.

"There is an existing total log ban in Bataan due to rampant illegal logging and timber poaching. We have to find out from the legality of the shipment," De Leon said.

Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon

■ NUEVA ECIJA

Dengue kills 14

DENGUE cases in Nueva Ecija have reached 777, including 14 deaths, since January, provincial health chief Dr. Benjamin Lopez said.

Cabanatuan City topped the list with 217 cases. Five victims have died.

Bongabon has 38 cases, San Leonardo, 29; Talavera, Gapan and Muñoz, 24 each; Cabiao, 23; Gumba, 20; and Sta. Rosa, 24.

Lopez said two deaths each had been reported in Talavera and San Antonio, and one death each in the Science City of Muñoz, Palayan City, Rizal, Carranglan and Quimba.

Jasmine Reyes, Inquirer Central Luzon

■ BACOLOD CITY

Silay water rates stay

THE LOCAL Water Utilities Administration (LWUA) rejected a request to increase water rates in Silay City.

The agency's chair, Prospero Pichay Jr., said on Sunday that programs would be undertaken to keep water rates down in all districts.

Pichay, who was accompanied by Negros Occidental Board Member Melvin Bustos, met with heads of the different water districts in Bacolod.

Carlo P. Gomez, Inquirer Visayas

■ JOLO, HALU

2 Abu Sayyaf men yield

TWO ALLEGED Abu Sayyaf members, who claimed to have ran Indonesian terror suspects Dulmatin and Umar Patek, have surrendered, the military said on Tuesday.

Radjih Hari alias Dok, 50, an Abu Sayyaf sub-leader, and his son-in-law Feisal Sali, 29, yielded two Bataan rifles when they gave up on Sept. 21 to members of the 5th Marine Battalion Landing Team, Col. Eugenio Clemente, commander of the 3rd Marine Brigade, said.

"Their surrender exemplifies that there is meaningful reconciliation despite violence and bloodshed if they sincerely seek it," said Maj. Gen. Juanito Sobejon, Joint Task Force Comet commander.

Ed Cabral, Inquirer Mindanao

Nurse among 3 alleged rebels slain

A Hilti enjoys the peace and serenity inside the Bais-na-Bato National Park in Bulacan despite reports that marble quarrying has resumed. DAVID MALASAN

Townsfolk stop trucks carrying marble

By Carmela Reyes
Inquirer General Luzon

CITY OF SAN JOSE DEL MONTE—RESIDENTS of San Miguel town in Tuesday blocked a village road to prevent trucks from transporting marble blocks, saying they would do everything to stop mining activities in the Bisk-na-Bato National Park and Protected Reservation.

Rosemel Santiago, chair of Barangay Minuyan in San Miguel, led 100 residents in blocking four trucks carrying quarried marble owned by Rosemore Mining and Development Corp. (RMDC). They set up a barricade to discourage mining activities that cause flash floods in the village, he said.

The residents, he said, had become vigilant and wanted to stop mining in Bisk-na-Bato for fear of sudden floods that once destroyed their farms in 2004.

"The use of explosives during mining operations has generated debris and other wastes that clogged our irrigation canals and waterways," Magpi said.

On Wednesday last week, residents also prevented another Rosemore truck carrying marble from leaving San Miguel. The vehicle was allowed to leave the following day after a local environment official confirmed that Rosemore had an ore transport permit (OTP) issued by the regional Mines and Geosciences Bureau.

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Bernard Santiago, chief of the community environment and natural resources office (Cenro) in San Rafael town, said Bisidio Uykieng, MGB Central Luzon director, had issued a memorandum informing them that an OTP had been granted to Rosemore on Sept. 12.

Rep. Joselito Mendoza said he would exhaust all efforts to stop mining in Bisk-na-Bato.

"The villagers in San Miguel are opposing mining activities and we just have to ensure that only those marble blocks approved in the OTP would be (taken) from the excavations and allowed to be transported," Mendoza said.

Governano Villeta, president of the antimining Bulakbulak Inc. based in San Miguel, said the group would not stop their fight because they want to save Bulacan's natural resources.

Mining operations in the Bisk-na-Bato-mineral reservation area in Doña Remedios Trinidad and San Miguel towns resumed recently after the Department of Environment and Natural Resources allowed Rosemore to quarry and transport marble.

In July 2008, then Environment Secretary Angelo Reyes suspended the company's permit to operate and ordered a stop to the issuance of a transport permit pending its compliance with the DENR directives.

Reyes' order came at the height of a campaign launched by then Gov. Josefina de la Cruz to stop mining in the Bisk-na-Bato area and to cancel Rosemore's 25-year Mineral Production Sharing Agreement. The provincial board also passed a resolution canceling the agreement.

By Jhanrose Nagaillanan
Inquirer Visayas

CEBU CITY—RACHELLE MAE JALANG had wanted to take up medicine after passing the nursing board exams in June. Her dream ended on Thursday when government troops clashed with communist rebels in Danao, Negros Oriental.

Jalang, 22, a daughter of a former town councilor in Cebu and two other alleged rebels were killed in the encounter, according to the military.

The young nurse had carried an M-16 rifle and was a member of the New People's Army (NPA) Southeast Front of the Bonifacio Rebayan-ng Central Visayas, said Lt. Col. Bernard Bril, head of the 79th Infantry Battalion.

Her father Elenito, who served as councilor in Carcar before town in Cebu, denied that she was armed. He told radio station dyLA that when he and his wife Sally, Carcarleon planning officer, claimed the body of their daughter at Cebu Memorial Homes in Dumaguete City on Army official had told him that the soldiers did not recover any firearm from her.

He identified the military officer as a certain Colonel Yano.

According to Elenito, Rachelle had asked for his permission to go on a medical mission.

Rachelle was the second of four siblings. She graduated valedictorian from the Mandaue City Science High School and was a dean's lister when she took up nursing at Silay College.

She was an editor of the campus publication. The military said she was the vice president of the College Editors' Guild of the Philippines (CEGP) in Central Visayas.

Rachelle's body was found after a 45-minute encounter in a forested area of Sitio Lampak, Malabuhay, Dako, Danao at around 5 p.m. on Sept. 18. It was cremated on Monday at Cosmopolitan Funeral Homes in Mead Hills here.

The two other fatalities were Antonio Villahongha, alias Ka Ildong, Ka Ebong and Ka Ebone, alleged leader of the NPA group, and Gerry Cabanguy, alias Abel.

Kampanas said Villahongha came from Bohol. Cabanguy, according to the military, was from Barangay Sun, Cebu City.

An M-16 rifle and an M-14 rifle were recovered from the two, Bril said. Documents, medical paraphernalia, backpacks, hammocks and personal belongings were retrieved from the scene of encounters.

"It was a legitimate operation," Bril said. He cited military information that 13 to 20 rebels, including two women, were collecting foodstuff and organizing people in the village.

Milk crisis helps campaign for breastfeeding

BACOLOD CITY—HEALTH OFFICIALS AND breast cancer patients and survivors are advocating breastfeeding in light of the ban on imported infant milk products from China.

Breastfeeding lessens the risk of breast cancer, said Dr. Raquel Tiotuan, president of the Negros Obstetric Medical Society. Mothers who breastfeed their children lower the cancer risk because their estrogen level decreases, he said.

The prolonged exposure of estrogen, a natural hormone, stimulates cells in the breast and increases the risk of breast cancer, he said.

"This is the time that the advocacy on breastfeeding should be strengthened and for people to realize that infant formula milk has so much contamination," he said.

Breast milk remains the best and safest for babies, Tiotuan said. "It is always fresh, warm and sterile. It is always available and enhances mother and child bonding."

Estrogen becomes absent from the first stages of pregnancy until the sixth month.

If a mother breastfeeds her child until he or she is 2 years old, she enjoys the protection from the risk of breast cancer, Tiotuan said.

"If only people had learned that breast milk is still the best milk, we would have much healthier children. But it had to take us the melamine problem to understand all of this," said Dr. Artemio Bautista, chairer head of the disease prevention unit of the Department of Health-Caraballeta.

Tiotuan said the Philippine Medical Association, the DOH and other medical and health institutions were mounting efforts to campaign for breastfeeding.

He said the milk crisis would serve as a welcome reminder for them to discourage mothers to use commercial formula milk and support legislations that regulate advertisements of formula milk products. Bonieve Cabanas, *Inquirer Northern Luzon*

Bush calls crisis summit; McCain, Obama in talks on bailout

Front page A1

in which the economy has emerged as the dominant theme.

"The plan that has been submitted to Congress by the Bush administration is flawed, but the effort to protect the American economy must not fail," they said in an unusual joint statement on Wednesday night.

"This is a time to rise above politics for the good of the country. We cannot risk an economic catastrophe."

Presidential politics intended, nonetheless, when McCain said earlier Wednesday he intended to return to Washington and was asking Obama to agree to delay their first debate, scheduled for Friday, to deal with the financial meltdown.

Obama said the debate should go ahead. (See story in The World, Page A19)

Senior lawmakers and Bush administration officials have chained away key obstacles in a deal on the unprecedented rescue, agreeing to include widely supported limits on pay packages for top executives whose companies will benefit from the plan.

Global markets, however, remained on tenterhooks as negotiations dragged on, investors sought cash and safe haven assets, briefly sending short-term interest rates below zero. Reports said banks were hoarding cash, worried that if they loaned money to other banks they might not get repaid.

There was still wrangling in Congress over major elements on the $700-billion package, including how much of the money would be released in phase in the eye-popping cost—a measure demanded by Democrats and some Republicans who want stronger congressional control over the bailout—before spending members.

A plan is let the government take an ownership stake in troubled companies as part of the rescue, rather than just buying bad debt, was also under intense negotiation.

A bipartisan meeting was set for Thursday to begin drafting a compromise, which top Democrats said they hoped could pass within days.

The core of the plan envisions the government buying up vast amounts of shaky financial firms in a bid to keep them from going under and to stave off a potentially severe recession.

Tough vote

In a prime-time television address on Wednesday night (Thursday morning in Manila), Bush acknowledged that lawmakers faced a "tough vote" on the planned $700-billion bailout that would be larger than the total cost of the Iraq war.

Congressional failure to approve the plan would risk dire consequences for the economy and most Americans, he said.

"Without immediate action by Congress, America could slip into a financial panic, and a distressing scenario would unfold," Bush said in his address to the nation's two top presidential candidates.

Bush's warning came soon after he invited Democratic presidential candidate Obama and his Republican rival McCain, one of whom will inherit the economic mess he leaves behind, to an key congressional huddles in a White House meeting on Thursday to work on a compromise.

Progress

With the Bush administration's original proposal considered dead in Congress, House leaders said they were making progress toward revised legislation that could be approved.

Moreover, after Bush spoke on Wednesday, powerful Democrat Rep. Barney Frank said a bailout bill would pass. "Earlier today, it became clear to me we would get the votes to pass this bill," Frank, who chairs the House of Representatives financial services committee, told CNBC.

Frank also said House and Senate Democrats had reached agreements on what should be in the bill and that a meeting with the Republicans had been scheduled for 10 a.m. on Thursday.

Senate banking committee chair Christopher Dodd also expressed optimism a deal was nearing. "We're not there yet ... but there's a good possibility we'll get there in a day or so," he told reporters.

Frank, who has led negotiations with Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson on the package, declared the White House meeting was a distraction given the progress of the talks.

"We're going to have to interrupt a negotiating session tomorrow between the Democrats and Republicans on a bill where I think we are getting pretty close, and sweep down to the White House for their photo op," he said.

"I wish they'd checked with us."

Pandora and Federal Reserve Chair Ben Bernanke have been crisscrossing Capitol Hill in recent days, shuttling between public hearings on the proposal and private meetings with lawmakers, to sell the proposal.

Objections

Lawmakers in both parties have objected strenuously to the seven-plus over the past two days, with legislators complaining about federal interference in private business and Democrats pressing to curb on more restrictions and help for beleaguered homeowners.

But many lawmakers in both parties said they were open to legislation, although on different terms than the White House has proposed.

Some partisan sticking points remain.

Democrats are pushing to allow bankruptcy judges to reverse mortgages to ease the burden on homeowners who are facing foreclosure—a measure by Republicans.

Democrats acknowledge privately that the provision will almost certainly be dropped in the interest of a bipartisan deal. Obama told reporters it was "predictable something else are doubtful" if it is to do the piece of legislation.

Democrats also want any potential proceeds the government reaps from the bailout to go to a fund designed to pay for housing for poor families. Many Republicans oppose the very existence of the fund, which they say is a backdoor means of funneling money to liberal political groups.

Democrats demands that Congress be given greater authority over the bailout and that the government be required to help homeowners renegotiate their mortgages or they have lower monthly payments already have been accepted in principle.

Asian markets weaker

Most Asian stock markets were weaker and the US dollar dipped against major currencies on Thursday on lingering worries about the timing and scale of rescue plan and fears of the financial contagion deepening.

Other nations braced for fallout from the US bailout package, which prompted confidence weakened in Germany, France and Italy to September, making fears the euro zone is sinking into recession as the turmoil spreads.

The euro rose 0.6 percent from last US trade to around $1.47. The dollar index, which tracks the currency's performance against six major currencies, dropped 0.3 percent.

Gold gained to around $890 an ounce, rising toward Tuesday's seven-week high.

The crisis comes after a month of meltdowns marked by the US government's takeover of mortgage companies Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, the bailout of insurer American International Group Inc., and the bankruptcy filing of investment bank Lehman Brothers Holdings Inc. Reports from AFP and Reuters

Blue Eagles dethrone Green Archers

Front page A1

mind, who keyed the 69-61 victory in the series opener with a phenomenal 31 points, scored all his seven markers in the third canto after riding the bench most of the first half due to early foul trouble.

"Being in the Finals for nine years, I've never seen the worst officiating in my 9 years," said an angry coach Franz Pumaren said after the Archers lost top two players JV Quinco and Rico Maierhofer in the second half due to fouls.

"It's like a script, you know the ending. They should have just given the trophy right away."

Although the overall head-to-head matchup between the two seniors remains tilted toward the Archers with 25 wins in 44 showdowns since 1986, the Eagles always have the upper hand some championship days.

The Eagles now have won three of their four epic championship encounters, including a sweep in 1998 and 2001 while La Salle scored in 2003.

Finest run

It was also Atoy's finest run in the last two decades. The Eagles wrapped up the season with 13 straight victories and finished with only one loss, a 71-66 decision from the Far Eastern University in the eliminations nearly two months ago.

It was also the first time the Archers, under Pumaren, got swept in one season by their arch-rival. The Eagles triumphed by an average of 8.25 points in their two meetings this year.

"Today is one of those occasions where we have to win," Black said after the Eagles squirmed their fourth overall crown in the league. "You don't go into the season thinking you're going to sweep La Salle, that's for sure."

Known for their ability to rise from adversity the hard way, led by Cantu, trailed within three points at 45-58 after trailing 26-37 at halftime.

The Archers fired 10 of their 21 points from three-point range, 12 coming from Cantu, in a rally that came despite the ejection of Maierhofer with 3:51 minutes left in the third period.

Dirty finger

Game officials said Maierhofer, a Mythical Team member who averaged 13.1 points and 10.1 rebounds, flashed a dirty finger after earlier getting slapped with a technical foul for taunting in the second period.

Maierhofer claimed, however, that he was just signaling a teammate to check out with his index finger.

"It's a crucial game and you're going to call a technical foul when the player is not doing anything," Pumaren complained. "They didn't even allow us to play calling a foul like that in a championship."

But the Archers couldn't contain their champion and the Eagles took advantage of a La Salle scoring drought early in the last quarter to pull away to a 57-49 spread heading into the final two minutes.

Cantu, also a Mythical Team member, finished his fifth and final foul against Jai Reyes with 2:46 minutes left. He led the Archers with 18 points.

Black's status

The victory also fortified Black's status in Philippine basketball for having won both in the pro and the collegiate level.

"A lot of my success [in the pro league] came was not just as a coach but as a player," said Black, who won his first title with the Eagles on his fourth year after bagging 13 titles in a PBA career.

"Up until four years ago I've never coached in college basketball so obviously it's a learning experience for me also. It's a different brand of basketball. More importantly, the most satisfying thing is watching the players grow. And as they improve, the team improves and gets better. That's why I'm very happy for Rabeh, he really worked hard to improve his skills and ended up being MVP," he said.

SEASON MVP Rabeh Al-Hussaini receives a pass off La Salle's Rico Maierhofer, who was later sent out of the game by officials. STORY ON PAGE A19

The game drew 22,935 fans, a clear proof that the two powerhouses squads unfailingly create a basketball buzz no local matchup can generate.

It's the kind of mania that drove the hards to queue and camp overnight at the Araneta Coliseum's entrance to purchase a P350 person ticket for a bonafide price of P225,000 and even prompted the Tix hardly to hire bodyguards for ticketwin Chris the past days.

Extra tight

Joss Idor in Game 1, seventy-one-seven right with over a hundred pollee from Camp Crame and the Quezon City Police District, 45 anti-dugs and colorum bouncers deployed inside and outside the Big Dome.

But to some misnomer, the Araneta security passed too successfully strict as only phlegmatic fans were allowed to cover at coolside. All reporters, even from the national newspapers, were asked to leave and remind up evening on television at the press room.

A handful of reporters were later allowed in go inside the hardcourt, but only those to orbiter chairs.

Even at halftime, the Eagles gathered at the corner court for the renovation with some openly sweeping with joy together with the star-studded crowd.

At Hussaini and Yu, the two players who primarily carried the Eagles on their shoulders this season, also got locked up in a long embrace amid the frenzied celebration.

The, who played his Final year in the league, summed it up for the Eagles. "We made sure to be aggressive and just gave everything that we had."

The scores

ATENEO (81)—Yu 16, Hernandez 3, Cortez 3, Al-Hussaini 7, Ildefon 5, Hontiveros 3, Reyes 3, Salenga 5, Apacible 2, Tolentino 0, Ramos 0, Ildefonso 0, Torres 0, Mamuyac 0, Sena 0.

LA SALLE (69)—Cantu 18, Wakefield-Taylor 3, Austria 7, Singletary 3, Mercado 11, Mangahas 3, Maierhofer 7, Nelle 0, Quinco 0, Bonoan 0, Ramos 0, Ilustre 0, Ong 0, Ilustre 0, Ong 0.

Global crisis threatens work of RP women abroad

Front page A1

government to assess the country's migration policies and provide local employment to the unskilled labor because of the global economic slowdown.

"The shortage of economists has diminished the possibilities for low-skilled workers," Alburo said in his keynote speech at the first International Conference on Gender, Migration and Development held at Manila yesterday.

Alburo, a former Socioeconomic Planning and development secretary said the development would be "an opportunity for the Philippines to manage its migration policies and seriously consider ways to attract home its migrant workers, especially the women, before the crunch sets in."

The forum, hosted by the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW), opened yesterday with some 500 delegates from 15 countries, including nations in Asia, the Americas and Europe.

Doors closing

Calling women migrant workers a "more vulnerable segment of migrant communities," Alburo revealed that the Department of Foreign Affairs recently released a report that "several traditional destinations for women service workers were closing their recruitment doors."

"It was also reported that even low-paid jobs were getting even lower. Jesus, it may not even be an economic sin to have women workers accept unbelievably low jobs. It can be even take into account the serious social costs of such abuses with and mother," she said.

Feminization of migration

Increasing 10 years of migration of Filipino women around the world, Alburo noted the continuing "feminization" of Filipino migration over the years, with women found to leave the country as domestics, mail-order brides, nurses and caregivers for lack of opportunities at home.

Alburo said roughly 60 percent of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) as of 2006 were women. "Due to the increase in global need for services."

A 2007 count placed the number of Filipinos abroad at 8.27 million, making the Philippines one of the world's largest labor exporter after China and India.

From April to September of 2008, some 784,000 Filipino women left for country according for 58.4 percent of OFW departures in that period, according to the NCRFW.

The figure was a 15.6-percent jump from 2003 departures, the commission's statistics showed.

Jobs pay less for women

Despite this trend and the country's higher female literacy rate, Alburo said most women migrant workers were taking on jobs that pay less than their male counterparts.

"While Filipino women likely extend up in jobs that need more skills and therefore better paid, the women are likely to get jobs that are low-paying and set-of-no-opportunity," she said.

Toxic milk downs baby zoo animals

Front page A1

Animal Hospital.

Powdered milk from Sanlu

The powder was made by Sanlu Group Co., which is at the center of the tainted milk crisis. The huge scandal over the melamine has been fanned to a growing range of Chinese-made dairy products, and it has been blamed for sickening 53,000 infants in China and killing four.

"The milk powder crisis made us very worried about the health situation of baby animals," Jr Lijia, the animal park's public affairs manager, said by phone on Wednesday.

"We stopped feeding with Sanlu after it was found to be tainted."

The arrangements and loss were the only ones found such kidney stones, Jr said.

Officials at the Beijing Zoo said zoos in the other major cities of Shanghai, Guangzhou and Xian said they had no cases of animals sickened from milk powder.

An official at the world's most famous panda reserve, the Wolong National Nature Reserve, said the baby pandas there were not fed milk made from formula.

Mindanao humanitarian needs real–Oxfam

Captives may be freed before Ramadan's end

By Julie S. Alipala
Inquirer Mindanao

ZAMBOANGA CITY—KIDNAPPERS HAVE to negotiate the release before the end of the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan of his construction workers Mel De Mesa and Eu Jr. Pepenicio Espido along with a some held since July, officials said yesterday.

Basilan Vice Gov. Al Hatimil Sakalahul said he received yesterday another call from the kidnap group, which is being led by a certain "Abu Sulaiman" who he was asked to do a "one-shot" negotiations for the release of Mendiola, Espido and some Peruvian Felizardo.

"The kidnappers wanted to dispose of all their captives before the end of Ramadan because they are moving somewhere else," Sakalahul said the hostages.

He said the kidnappers demanded "very high ransom" for Mendiola but he did not say what this was.

Sakalahul only said the kidnappers wanted the ransom for Mendiola to "deliver" but were unclear on the amount. He said he had no idea on the demand for Espido, but another source said it was P3 million.

As for Felizardo, who is from Zamboanga, Sakalahul said the kidnappers were unwilling to settle for less only to exchange for P25 million.

Mendiola and Espido were among six people abducted on Sept. 13 while they were painting Barangay Cabunga-an, which borders the towns of Tipo-Tipo Central and Al-basha in Basilan. four subsequently escaped.

Cash for information

Sakalahul said the kidnappers had become bold and started charging negotiators seeking information.

"Now they have this minimum fee of at least P10,000 for a single information, such as how the victims are doing right now. Even speaking with the kidnappers' emissaries seems rampant with a price tag. I decided some moment just to speak with them," said Sakalahul, who was named local negotiator by the Basilan crisis committee.

He said that the kidnappers also appeared to be trying to raise cash from other possible victims.

"The kidnappers also asked P1 million from me before they would give Miller and Espido's letters to the negotiators and to their respective families. Imagine, just a single letter and they want to make money out of it," he said.

Espido's husband Nestor told the Inquirer on the kidnapping had taken a toll on their four children.

Nestor said the agony of waiting for information was too much for his three children.

"My children are wondering how their mother is even in the US? How is her food? Is she being treated well and not harmed? They have so many questions and it is so difficult for me to explain," he said.

He said his eldest son had stopped going to school. "I can sense that something is wrong. I have been breaking down many times, their questions, especially my youngest," Nestor said.

Appeal to gov't

Sakalahul said Mendiola's family in Mandaluyong also very much worried.

"The other week, Mel's auntie sister was here in Basilan, and two days ago, her brother came. They are very concerned and they want to focus on what we are doing here," he said.

Nestor appealed to the government: "Please help us, we are not a rich family. We are even struggling to make a living and my wife even sacrificed her previous time for her children just to work and help these communities."

He said he believed that the local officials of Tipo-Tipo, Albasha and Hadjiah Paksin (town) could help because "they know who these people are."

UK aid agency disputes Palace denial of crisis in Mindanao

HUNGER AND DISEASE STILL confronted camps for people forced out of their homes in the current fighting in Mindanao and workers risk getting caught in the crossfire as they can go back to their war-torn villages or get food to feed their children, Oxfam.

The grim condition of thousands of people displaced by the month-long fighting between government forces and secessionist commanders of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) was reported by the respected British charity Oxfam in a statement yesterday.

Lui Hornedo, country director of Oxfam, displayed claims by Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita on Wednesday that there were no humanitarian crisis in Mindanao and that the situation there was "not that bad."

"The humanitarian needs in Mindanao are real. The armed conflict has caused suffering for civilians and worsened their experience of poverty," Hornedo said.

"Government and other civil society agencies are doing what we can but, at the same time, we continue to see numerous who go hungry in shelters, constant illnesses, and running for their lives. Civilians live in fear for their safety and lives because of the presence of armed groups in their villages. Children have also stopped going to school," she said.

"All these government and NGOs alike will not meet all the needs if more and more civilians get maimed in the conflict. It is important that state and non-state authorities who have the responsibility to protect civilians affected by the conflict recognize and put their rights and immediate needs front and center," Hornedo said.

Mothers risk life and limb

"Oxfam has seen how mothers risk life and limb by going back to their homes to pick vegetables for their children. Without enough food to go around, mothers sometimes give up meals for their children," the statement said.

"Evacuees, who are mostly farmers, tell how animals that are central to their livelihood, thereby putting long-term livelihoods recovery at risk. Many internally displaced persons (IDPs) have gone to barangay centers, which are hard or impossible to reach by aid," it said.

"It is civilians who bear the most in times of conflict. Women, in particular, are hit the hardest as they take care of the well-being of the family under unnecessary. They have to constantly worry about their husbands' and children's safety," Hornedo said.

"Women have to accept odd, sometimes risky, jobs to supplement the family income because they cannot continue with their usual economic activities that get disrupted by hostilities. Many succumb to stress-related diseases," she said.

UN appeal for funds

The World Food Program (WFP) said around 500,000 people had been displaced by the fighting in Mindanao. The UN food agency has been providing a month's rations of 25 kilos of rice for each displaced family, but its annual budget for IDPs has been depleted by the current conflict.

The WFP has issued an appeal for funds, fearing that with successive flooding and no reported rains, there is evidence at the end of the looting month of Ramadan, it cannot cope with a swelling IDP population.

However, an substantial donation has come in, said WFP country director Stephen Anderson. Rome will be forthcoming, he said, unless the government attends to appeal...something that Ermita and on Wednesday was not necessary at this point because the government has enough resources to deal with the problem.

"Like Burma, we don't need international aid agencies," said one political analyst, referring tongue in cheek to reclusive Burma's refusal to allow foreign assistance in spite of the massive devastation caused by a cyclone in May that killed more than 80,000 people.

DSWD aid insufficient

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) provides evacuees with a three-day food package consisting of three kilos of rice, five packs of noodles and three cans of sardines per family.

Least aid workers in Maguindanao said that the DSWD assistance was not enough for the displaced, some of whom have been in the camps for over a month.

The Geneva-based International Committee of the Red Cross specializes in conflict zones that the evacuees are in route in the camps, where there is no sanitation facilities or potable water.

Sen. Richard Gordon, chair of the Philippine National Red Cross, has urged the government to comply with the Geneva Conventions that mandates no one pursuing out that displaced civilians crammed in makeshift evacuation camps are noncombatants and need protection and assistance.

22 rebels dead in latest clashes in South, says AFP

By Inquirer Mindanao
and Nikko Dizon in Manila

CLASHES SINCE TUESDAY BETween government forces and guerrillas of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) have left at least 22 rebels dead in Central Mindanao, the military reported yesterday.

Lt. Col. Julieto Nafio, spokesperson of the military's 6th Infantry Division, said about 30 rebels embushed a team of policemen in Barangay Salug in Alamada, North Cotabato, around 8 a.m. yesterday.

Two officers, PO3 James Jolito and Ronilo Calanigan, were wounded in the encounter.

An hour later, elements of the 40th Infantry Battalion clashed with the fleeing rebels for about an hour, killing three rebels, Nafio said.

Not MILF, says Kabalu

On Tuesday, 19 rebels were killed and three soldiers were wounded in clashes in Datu Saudi Ampatuan, Maguindanao, according to 90th Infantry Battalion spokesperson 1st Lt. Jo Rex Bugtai.

The rebel hostilities were confirmed by the civilians and we also intercepted radio communications between the rebels confirming the figure," Pamati said.

But Eid Kabalu, MILF civil-military affairs chief, said only one rebel was killed.

"It was the military which suffered many casualties," he said.

The military identified six of the rebel dead: Ibrahim Rahmat of Barangay Mradim; Fahad Faisal and Saamdin Faisal, both of Barangay Lapak; Mudtasim Tyaw of Barangay Tiwa; Imam Aba of Barangay Pamalian; and Haider Salaman of Barangay Pagalu.

Col. Hadrus Salmay, commander of the 601st Infantry Brigade, said the military was still checking on the identities of the other fatalities in the encounter at Mlang-Mlang, Barangay Dagupan, Datu Saudi Ampatuan.

On Tuesday night, the Army fired artillery rounds on suspected MILF positions in a forested area at Barangay Tee in Datu Piang, Maguindanao, after it swallowed a counteroffensive of renegade MILF fighters planning a counter attack, said Maj. Armand Macoco, spokesperson of the military's Eastern Mindanao Command.

Bugtai added that late Wednesday at

COME HELL OR HIGH WATER The soldiers embark in heavy rain from a small boat as they cross a river in Datu Piang town, in the Maguindanao on Sept. 19.

noon, troops from the 40th Infantry Battalion engaged More rebels in an hour-long gun battle in Sitio Budtayan in Barangay Mladista, Gen. SanTos, Maguindanao, until the rebels withdrew toward Bualan Munti.

Not independently confirmed

Early yesterday morning, the 39th Infantry Battalion clashed with an undetermined number of More rebels who "burned" a military detachment in Barangay Bulila in Midsayap, North Cotabato.

The National Disaster Coordinating Center in Manila said over 93 people had been killed since clashes erupted in Mindanao last month after a deal on an expanded Bangsamoro homeland fell apart.

The military has reported several hundred MILF soldiers had been killed in the fighting but the claims cannot be independently confirmed and the MILF has denied the army reports. With reports from Jeoffrey Maitem, Edwin Fernandez and Jeffrey Tupas, Inquirer Mindanao

Paging Angelina Jolie; MILF seeks star's help

From page A1

That's when the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) names the find-'yawad star' to do.

This is the second time that a Philippine group has appealed to Ms Jolie to come to the country.

Eid Kabalu, MILF civil-military affairs chief, said Ms Jolie, who is also ambassador of goodwill of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), could possibly use a stay in the current bloodline ting in Mindanao.

He said that he was concerned about the plight of more than 500,000 people affected by the intensifying fighting.

"Everybody is welcome in helping resolve the problem, whether actor, actress, international body or prominent figure," Kabalu said.

Special interest

He said the MILF's special interest in Ms Jolie stems after Shakespeare, announced it would ask the United Nations to declare as terrorists MILF rebels who attacked towns in North Cotabato and Lanao del Norte last month, killing scores of civilians.

"The government said before they were giving priority to peace talks and now they are going to the United Nations. It's good so we can defend our organization," Kabalu said.

The first time

In December last year, the Khmer singer-turned-actress Angelina Jolie (MILF) asked the UNHCR to send Angelina to check on the living conditions of people displaced by army offensives against extremist insurgency and More separatists.

The MILF said it had been asking High Commissioner Antonio Guterres since June 2005 to send Ms Jolie to ease the real situation of internally displaced people (IDPs) here. It said hundreds of people were being forced out of their homes and farms every month.

Ms Jolie, who starred in Hollywood film "Tomb Raider" and "Mr. and Mrs. Smith" opposite third Pitt, has been promoting refugee causes, traveling to UNHCR camps in Asia and Africa and appealing to governments to open their doors to refugees...despite finding a well-founded fear of persecution and an outside their country.

The UN refugee agency does not usually deal with IDPs unless there is an appeal by a government that is approved by the UN secretary general. With Efrin Moreria, Inquirer Research

Beware, criminals now use hypnotism

From page A1

time who were supposedly hypnotized into giving up their cash and valuables.

According to Ang See, the operations were believed to have been carried out by three women speaking in Mandarin who would roam the streets of Binondo and snoop down on unsuspecting Chinese females walking alone.

"Through some form of hypnotic suggestion, the victims follow the commands of the women," Ang See said.

Casting a 'spell'

One victim related that she was walking when one of the women approached her purportedly to ask for help. The victim held on to her arm and looked her in the eye. Another suspect then appeared and whispered something into her ear.

Falling under some "spell," the hypnotized victim then went to her bank to open her safe deposit boxes, according to Ang See.

Another victim was hypnotized the same way into going back to her home in Quezon City to retrieve her cash and valuables. She then returned to Binondo to turn the stash over to the suspects.

Ang See said the area concerned by another victim who lives in Santa Mesa ng and said she was victimized the same way.

Sleep-saved her

Another victim was not robbed, Ang See said, but felt weak after the suspects tapped her three times on the shoulder. She went home, took her valuables from her cabinet and, fortunately, fell asleep.

Waking up refreshed, she was puzzled why she had consented to give up her valuables. She reported the matter to Ang See's group.

Ang See said her group had asked the victims to provide composite sketches of the other potential victims could be arrested and the suspects arrested.

Use of poison

Another new method is the poisoning of money handlers.

Ang See said female members of criminal gangs apply so innocuous with Talcum powder. Later, they would poison their employers and rob the house of cash and valuables.

Ang See said that on Aug. 22, Jennifer Lwendeo, 30, and her alleged cohort, Rita Hernandez, were nabbed in Lwendeo's residence at Project 7, Quezon City, after they were accused of poisoning their employers and robbing them.

Recovered from Lwendeo were cash and the ATM cards of her late victim, said Ang See. Other similar cases came to the attention of the police against the two suspects.

There was no toothache

Such incidents could have been avoided "had the medical facilities taken steps to assist others," Ang See said.

A dentist fell victim to another method.

One of the criminals had posed as a patient and made an appointment with the dentist to gain access to the clinic. On the day of the appointment, the "patient" appeared with a companion and announced a holdup.

The dentist handed in a hospital with broken bones and a fractured skull after being beaten and shot, Ang See said.

"We are compiling a composite sketch of his assailants and have warned other dentists and dentists to take precautionary steps to their clinics," she said.

Old methods still work

Ang See also warned against unscrupulous lawyers who "befriend" desperate or expectant and then have them to pay off to get the shipments released.

In other cases, policemen secure a search warrant and seize the goods of a storeowner. Then, the storeowner is asked to pay a "ransom" so he could get his goods back.

Ang See said that online people could be fooled enough to file charges. "Crimes like these will just continue."

The National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO) chief, Director Geary Barias, said his men were aware of the new modus operandi and were building up cases against suspects.

He said police had had some "success stories" with the arrest of several people.

"What is sad is that even with these new methods, there are still a lot of people being victimized by criminals using old methods, like the 'budol-budol,' and 'tulak'," Barias said.

Budol-budol involves, among others, using fake money to commercial transactions or passing off fake jewelry as genuine. Tulak involves tempting someone's valuables by distracting him.

Barias said he would investigate the cases of hijacking by rogue policemen.

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Aplus METRO
Editor Ester G. Diposcupil
Tell us your hunches:

DID YOU KNOW

Of the 701 Metro Manila child abandonments served by the social welfare department in 2007, a total of 120 had been abandoned, while 146 had been neglected. —Cyril L. Bonabono, Inquirer Research

2 brothers die in San Mateo landslide

Egg sandwiches could have caused food poisoning

By Allison W. Lopez and Amy R. Remo

SALMONELLA COULD HAVE caused the suspected food poisoning of 112 pupils of the Jose Gonzalez de Jesus Elementary School in Tondo, Manila.

Dr. Eric Tayag, chief of the Department of Health's Bureau of Epidemiology Center, said this was the initial finding of the department.

Tayag said salmonella contaminants was found in meals of the children who had diarrhea and threw up some 12 hours after eating uneaten food.

"Salmonella is usually found in contaminated eggs, and the canteen served scrambled egg sandwiches," Tayag said in a text message to reporters. But he stressed the investigation was not yet over.

The children were confined at the Jose Reyes Memorial Medical Center and the San Lazaro Hospital a day or two after eating egg sandwiches, hotdogs and mais con yelo (corn kernels in milk) prepared by their canteen on Friday.

School principal Trinidad Cabang said only one sandwich remained in the canteen.

Dr. Yolanda Oliveros, director of the National Center for Disease Prevention and Control, said 18 out of 30 samples tested positive for salmonella enteritidis.

Tayag welcomed the DOH investigation that is looking into the school's supplies of eggs, ice and bread.

"They also got water samples from our faucets [sites]. It was explained to me that salmonella could be transmitted in food and water," she told the reporters.

Cabang said their canteen, which served meals since 1950, let the DOH has completed its investigation, followed sanitary requirements, adding that she personally monitored its operations that day.

Some of the students treated for stomachache and gastroenteritis, she said, already had "heavy bacteria" contamination, indicating that the infection could have been caused by food or water from their own homes.

The DOH obtained water samples from areas near Canal de la Reina Regente, where Cabang said some pupils lived.

She added the canteen should serve as a reminder to everyone, especially parents, to be careful in handling food and beverages.

Meanwhile, Maynilad Water Services Inc. said yesterday it was cleared by the DOH in the food poisoning incident.

The company said laboratory tests conducted by its central laboratory and the Manila health department showed that the school's water supply was negative for any kind of bacteria.

It added that the water was also found to have "residual chlorine well above the 1.00 mg/liter mandated for drinking water."

Maynilad said it regularly conducted sampling of its water in over 800 points to make sure its water was safe and clean.

Ma saves daughter, fails to rescue trapped boys

By Beverly T. Hacintal

TWO BROTHERS DIED WEDNESDAY NIGHT after they were trapped inside their house following a landslide in San Mateo, Rizal province caused by heavy rains brought by Typhoon "Nitang."

The Provincial Disaster Coordinating Committee (PDCC) of Rizal identified the victims as 6-year-old Jester Collado and his 7-year-old brother Jhanzie of Lower Pulang Lupa, Barangay Sto. Niño.

The Collados' brothers were declared dead on arrival at the Garcia General Hospital in Marikina City. The boys were trapped inside their house in Pulang Lupa following a massive mud flow in the area.

Made of light materials, the Collado house was hit by a landslide-prone area at the foot of a mountain, said the PDCC.

According to the PDCC, the victims' mother, Ludita, was most reacting to flow at the height of the heavy rainfall around 10:30 p.m. She immediately brought her 5-year-old daughter Jessica out of the house to a safer area. She was almost to return for her two sons when their house was knocked down by the landslide, trapping the boys inside. Ludita and Jessica suffered minor injuries.

The PDCC said barangay officials earlier warned residents in the area to leave because of the threat of a landslide.

Other residents had already evacuated, but the Collados, family chose to stay behind. The survivors are now under the care of the municipal government of San Mateo.

BREAK TIME
A young boy takes time off to relax beside the Ninoy Aquino statue along Roxas in Manila after a long day. —MELVIN G. CALIM

Shipment of suspected drug-related items held

By Tina G. Santos

AGENTS OF THE BUREAU OF Customs (BOC) and Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) seized yesterday a shipment of laboratory equipment and chemicals suspected to be used in manufacturing illegal drugs.

Customs Commissioner Napoleon Morales said the shipment was stored in a 40-foot container that arrived at the Manila South Harbor from Japan last week. The seized items included beakers, test tubes, burners and other apparatus that could be used to make methamphetamine hydrochloride or shabu.

"We also found unknown chemicals apparently from China. We're looking into the possibility that these are also ingredients for manufacturing drugs," Morales said, adding that the shipment was declared as "used food processing machines and accessories."

But with the 3-ton machine discovering different images, authorities held the shipment, Morales said.

The shipment, that arrived on the ship Uni-Asean, was consigned to Sioson Sales Corp. with office address in Caloocan City, Valenzuela City.

The BOC said a certain Jessica Ordoñez of Room 708 SEF Building, 1340 Roxas Blvd., Tomás, Manila, allegedly brokered the shipment at the Port of Manila.

Morales said he ordered Customs Enforcement and Security Service director Vitaliano Rudowen to investigate the importer to determine the nature of his business.

He said charges of misdeclaration of goods would be filed against the shipment's consignee and broker.

Customs officials said there was a possibility that drug syndicates were transporting in small batches equipment for the construction of a large drug laboratory in the country.

1 killed, child injured as 4 vehicles collide at SLEx

By Bernadette D. Pasco
Inquirer Southern Luzon

SAN PABLO CITY—A VEHICular collision involving a 10-wheel cargo trailer truck and three other smaller vehicles resulted in the death of a driver, serious injury to his 11-year-old passenger and the buildup of a five-kilometer motorist traffic jam on both sides of the South Luzon Expressway early yesterday afternoon, an officer of the Philippine National Construction Corp. said.

The multi-vehicular accident took place at about 2:42 p.m. along the Southbound side of the Ilijan, near Bilaran 21, said Bienvenido Bagas of the PNCC.

Involved in the accident, were a 10-wheeler trailer truck, two Mitsubishi L300 vans and a Mazda 3 compact car.

Bagas said the Mazda, that was on its way to Manila, first hit a concrete barrier separating the north and south-bound lanes of the expressway.

After hitting the barrier, the car was hit on the rear by a Mitsubishi L300 van, causing it to turn a number of times. The car was again hit by another approaching L300 van, the barrier landed on the south-bound lane of the expressway hitting the 10-wheeler truck, Bagas added.

The accident caused a three-kilometer traffic jam on the north-bound side and a two-kilometer heavy buildup along the south-bound side of the expressway.

Bagas said the driver and passenger of the Mazda 3 were brought to nearby Perpetual Medical Hospital in Bilaran town, but the driver died because of serious injuries.

Albert Bolbas, motor supervisor of the Regional Medical Hospital, identified the ill-fated driver as Renato Arroyo Ilolas, who was declared dead on arrival at the hospital.

The child passenger was identified as Zeb Catubtub, 11, who is still in serious condition because of severe head injuries.

The boy was circumcised for transfer to another hospital for more tests.

The PNCC said that at about 3:23 p.m., the vehicles involved, had been cleared from the center of the lane and traffic was expected to normalize.

There were no injuries among the passengers of the other three vehicles involved in the accident.

Teen with congenital heart disease needs help

By Santiago B. Alcantara

ARVIE VICOY DELLOSO THAT an operation by underwent in 2003 had solved his congenital heart disease problem.

But the 16-year-old son of Reynaldo, a service driver of the Commission on Human Rights and Virginia, local say that the operation only offered temporary relief.

The Naya, residents of San Antonio Valley 1 in Barangay City

He said the defect in the mitral valve of his son, an outpatient at the Philippine Heart Center in Quezon City, was not fully repaired.

"My son is set to undergo another operation due to a defect in his mitral valve. This will involve a lot of money again," Reynaldo said as he appealed for help from kindred residents.

ARVIE with mother Virginia

Arvie, who is now confined at the Philippine General Hospital in Manila, is set to undergo the operation on Monday.

Those who want to help Arvie can call Reynaldo at 09275455963. His bank account with LandBank (Quezon Ilaya Circle Branch) is 0202030269.

METROBRIEFS

Bodies of 2 traders found in Makati, QC

A 48-YEAR-OLD American businessman was found dead inside his hotel room Wednesday morning in Makati City. Police said Melissa Duggan, a girlfriend of Marvin Leroy Sims Jr., was worried that the businessman had not been answering calls, and reported this to the staff of City Garden Hotel on Makati Avenue where Sims had been staying. The businessman was found unconscious inside the bathroom of his hotel, said Supt. Manuel Santos Jr., chief of Makati City's criminal investigation section. Santos said the victim was given first aid by a first aider, but efforts to revive him failed. Sims, of Ilo-ilo, Bonifacio Drive, Barangay Port Area, police are not yet ruling out the possibility of foul play. Meanwhile, the decomposed body of a Filipino-Chinese businessman was found yesterday morning inside his home in La Loma, Quezon City. Johnny Sy, 57, lives two kilometers to the east and had already been dead for a week, investigators said. Quezon City Police District Criminal Investigation and Detection Unit homicide section head Supt. Lito Banaag said Sy's body was discovered by his wife, Juanita, at around 8 a.m. yesterday at the ground floor of his two-storey house. Except for cellphone phone, Banaag said Sy's belongings were intact. By, who is separated from his wife, lived in the house with his male house helpers who are now missing.

Jobe M. Bernabe and Jeannette I. Andrade

Manila offers free eye checkups, operations

THE MANILA city government will offer free eye checks and cataract operations for its residents beginning Sept. 30. Digital eye therapists, dentists Dr. Jane Tan and Dr. Charlie L. Tan of the eye center Tan Eye Institute at the Dar Andres gymnasium on Sept. 30, while Districts 1, 2 and 3 will have theirs at the Tondo Sports Complex on Oct. 2. Cataract operations, meanwhile, will begin on Oct. 7 at the 05-auditorium for City Hall. 6, 6 and 6 while Districts 1, 2 and 3 operations will be at Hospital ng Tondo as a future date to be announced later. Tan said they would be able to accommodate 200 patients for the cataract operations while the eye checks would have no limit. Six operating tables and equipment will be brought in for the cataract operations while the hospital will provide volunteer nurses to assist in the operations. An "Operation Baket" for all kinds of skin lumps will also be held in collaboration with the Philippine Academy Medical Specialists (PAMS), a group of cosmetic surgeons and skin specialists, added Tan.

Allison W. Lopez

Bernabe Golf Cup at Villamor

THE FIRST Bonjo Bernabe Golf Cup is set to start off at 7 a.m. tomorrow at the Villamor Golf Club at Pasay City. The tournament, was organized by sportsman Bonjo Bernabe, Parañaque Mayor Florencio Bernabe Jr.'s eldest son, and his friends, to raise funds for sports for the youth and outreach missions to complement the city government's ongoing sports and health programs. "It is our modest way of helping the local government make Parañaque more livable and a better city," the younger Bernabe said. Around 140 golfers have confirmed their participation in the event, including members of golf clubs in Bonanza, BF Homes, Talisman Village, Don Bosco and Mercedes. The team that clinches championship in the third place in the three-man's and women's classifications will receive trophies along with bragging rights. He added that there are still a few slots open for tale-enders, and advised interested parties to call for reservations at 826-4611 (landline) or 09279006847 (mobile) and ask for Lorie.

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WHAT'S INSIDE

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SPORTS

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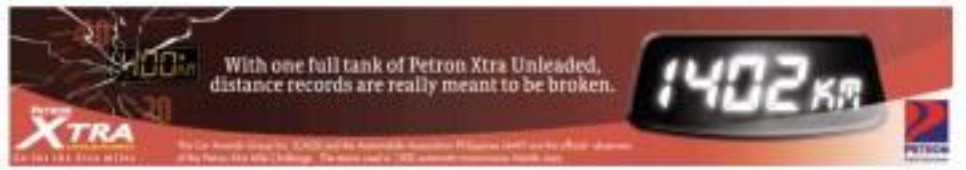
- Red Lions go for rare NCAA '3-peat' today/A29



Eagles pillar Baclao Finals MVP

By Cedoff Tupas

IT WAS A TEXT MESSAGE that proved prophetic.

TEARFUL TRIUMPH Arroyo coach Norman Black embraces reserve MVP Rabeh Al-Hussaini (back to camera) and junior forward John Manculabon (left) who were both overcome by emotion after the Blue Eagles finally won the ghost of their stunning defeat to the Green Archers in last year's stepladder semifinals.

At Arroyo rallied in defeat to La Salle in last year's stepladder semifinal, Norman "Pinoy" Baclao sent the Eagles' chief backer, Manny V. Angilas, a text message.

Baclao vowed to do everything in that the Eagles would win the title the following year.

Angilas replied: Just do your best.

Baclao made good his promise.

Tim Cone's 4-month exile from Ateneo City ended off a bustling night knee to another monster's position defense which proved the key for the two-game sweep of defending champion La Salle to the UAAP Finals.

"We are fortunate that when we went to Bacolod two years ago, we were able to recruit a player named Norman Baclao," Ateneo coach Norman Black said.

"He is the cornerstone of our defense," added Black of the long-armed forward who moved to the Katipunan campus from West Negros University, a school with a rich basketball history.

Baclao was named Most Valuable Player of the Finals after scoring eight points, grabbing 10 rebounds and blocking five shots in the title-clinching 62-51 triumph over the Green Archers at the jam-packed Araneta Coliseum last night.

Sporting jersey No. 7, Baclao had 7 points and 7 rebounds and 5 blocks in Game 1.

Baclao's payback with 2:33 left in the game and his offensive rebound that kneaded the Eagles an extra possession—which Jai Reyes converted with 1:37 left—sealed the Blue Eagles' first championship since 2002.

Baclao's block on Rito Maierhofer with 12 seconds left also proved crucial in the Game 1 victory.

Baclao said his knee hurt so much early in the third quarter that he never thought he would be able to return to the game.

Wiping off tears, Baclao came back with two minutes left in the third quarter.

"I really wanted to help the team, so I just ignored the pain," said Baclao, one of the Eagles' three co-captains along with Chris Tiu and Nonoy Baclao.

Pumaren rues Maierhofer ejection

GUIAO: Selection a lifelong dream

Guiao is RP five head coach at last

By Marong R. Candilo

IT TOOK 17 LONG YEARS BEFORE TONI Guiao was finally honored with the head coaching job of the national basketball team.

The fiery but thrill monger was given yesterday the prestigious nod, which he said "has been a lifelong dream" and one he almost gave up on after a controversial ouster booted him in 1991.

"It's quite a long wait," Guiao told the Inquirer after Philippine Basketball Association commissioner Humerali Marcos finally announced his choice at the league's offices in Libis, Quezon City.

Guiao won out over former national coaches Chot Reyes of Talk 'N Text, Tim Cone of Alaska, and Joey Lidstrom of Barangay Ginebra, becoming the sixth PBA coach to handle the national five.

"This is a great honor and privilege," Guiao said.

It was also sweet for the 46-year-old visa governor of Pampanga, who was snubbed as coach of the 1991 Jeux des Iles du Pacifique team by the Basketball Association of the Philippines.

But he said he made the choice after "soul-doing things" for himself in his first full year as top honcho of the PBA. It also helped that Guiao was endorsed by many league officials.

Guiao took two championships with the defunct Swift Mighty Meaties before winning another three import-spiced tournaments with Red Bull.

One of the early ideas that Guiao is entertaining for the national team is the recruitment of naturalized players in the lineup, something like the program in the past employed under former BF coach Ron Jacobs.

"We have to bite the bullet," Guiao said. "If we want to be included at least in the top three in Asia, we have to employ what the other countries are doing, and that is to tap naturalized players."

Other sports

ONE GAME AT A TIME

Sev Sarmenta

WHEN I WAS DOing college sports on TV, the producers would tell me and I would often grope for another term for sports outside of basketball. We wanted anything else but the oftenused "other sports."

The term was self-explanatory. And yet it admitted for a creative and more respectable alternative. I don't know if any other term has been coined.

Now that the Metro college hoop season is about to end, the "other" sports will dig in quietly and vie for the support of school communities. Some of them have already been played out but have been unintentionally overshadowed by the hoopla of hoops.

No blaming basketball. It is still the unanimous crowd-drawer, a sub-cult, transitional roller coaster perfect for young and every now and then veterans. It's short family in one-stretch and then close up to frustrations in the court.

For rivals like La Salle and Ateneo in the Big Dome and they can play a best-of-seven finals and the frenzied ensemble for talents would still be there. Ben Mbala vs Jarmar can fill up any venue just as well.

It's now time, though, to get students to discover new games and share his schoolmates who play variety sports outside of hoops.

Spend weekend afternoons at the ball park. Take in the sights, sounds and even the smell of a game that was once the summer's most popular from the old-timers to the latest fad of the eight-to-five set.

If swimming hasn't begun, bring the barkads to share for some very fine human specimens who didn't get the V's or their backs by simply lounging in the pool. Get caught up in the races to touch the wall first.

Or take in a little sun on the tennis court. You've been spending too much time in basement cubes or lurking in your room with music plugged in your ears. See how hard it is to chase a squash now or even the greatest of kids.

Watch badminton players deftly keep the shuttlecock afloat just when you thought it was going down.

Beachvolleyball bombings or judo might still be on the schedule. Expose yourself to the intricacies of self-defense and self-expression.

Following these might just be a tad intricate at first but soon you get the hang of it, you will understand why the players have their hearts set their dreams.

Soon, you'll be cheering, booing, fulminating and good-looking players are always a draw but look at how emerging plays are for quick spikes or open cuts.

In football, look how hard and yet how easy it seems for the players to control the ball with their feet. Share the excitement of goal scorers going bananas when they get into the goals.

There are heroes in track and field. When HSU athlete-director Mark Molina asked me to host the founding of their sports look last year, I recognized myself with Mona Sahalman, Lydia de Vega and Elma Muros who all came from HSU.

The time among your basketball schoolmates will get a chance to shake it to the big leagues and you can still watch them "lose" talent sports" friends will, at best, have college careers unless they're really good to make the national teams.

Yes there play. Their effort for your school will be just as heroic and significant.

SOLDOUT BOUT

$17M just for tickets to Pacquiao-Hoya clash

By Marc Anthony Reyes

ALL 16,000 SEATS AT THE MGM GRAND ARENA SOLD OUT FOR ABOUT $17 million within two hours Thursday making the Manny Pacquiao-Oscar De La Hoya rematch on Dec. 6 the second highest-grossing duel in boxing history.

Only the ticket sales of $16,619,200 for the super bout pitting De La Hoya and the non-retired Floyd Mayweather Jr. in May last year racked up more.

"This is just a reflection of the overwhelming interest in this confrontation and we are absolutely delighted that tickets sales were as swift," said Golden Boy Promotions CEO Richard Schaefer in a press release.

"The matchup is one of the best in boxing and will be one of the biggest events the sport has ever seen."

Pacquiao, the reigning WBC light-welterweight titlist, and De La Hoya, a 10-time world champion in six classes, will meet at the welterweight limit of 147 pounds in a 12-round, non-title fight.

"When you have two superstars like Pacquiao and De La Hoya fighting each other, the public is going to respond, and this is what they just did," said Bob Arum, president of co-promoter Top Rank. "No one wants to miss this one."

Tickets were priced from $300 to $1,300, according to GBP.

"It's a hot, hot fight," Arum told ESPN. "People will be screaming for tickets.

"How many fights that people go crazy about do $17 million, all in? But this fight is at $17 million and that does not even include the revenue that will be generated from the closed-circuit, the pay-per-view, the foreign (television) sales and the sponsorships."

The Mayweather-De La Hoya clash generated only 2.4 million PPV buys at $49.95 each. Mayweather won the fight by unanimous decision.

Arum had said the Pacquiao fight will top in the huge Filipino combat sweeten and he expected at least over million buys.

That would easily earn Pacquiao about $17 million from PPV alone based on his reported contract sharing of 35 percent and De La Hoya's 65.

Meanwhile, Pacquiao's top conditioner Ben "Wakee" Initial said he's surprised the ticket sales didn't have the Hollywood-De La Hoya record.

Just the same, the event's biggest fight surpassed the blockbuster gate revenue of $16,000,000 during the 1980 heavyweight championship between Leonon Lewis and Evander Holyfield.

"You can the Pacquiao (fight) will surpass (that of) Mayweather in pay-per-view because of Filipino fans world wide," Initial told the Inquirer. "Pacquiao fights differently than Mayweather, he's very exciting to watch."

The 35-year-old De La Hoya, whose fights regularly draw the rich and famous, has four fights among the top 10 in gate revenues in Nevada - including the ones against Felix Trinidad (September 1999) and Bernard Hopkins (September 2004). He lost both bouts.

Arum said there will be about 20,000 closed-circuit tickets to be sold for high-rollers billboard in Las Vegas hotels. They are priced between $50 and $100.

PACQUIAO: Exciting to watch

DE LA HOYA: Box-office giant

Salud: GAB, Rodriguez can't stop Pacman

By Recah Trinidad

LAWYER-SPORTSMAN RUBY SALUD YESTERDAY said he understands the concern of certain people over the perceived mismatch between Manny Pacquiao and Oscar De La Hoya but there's no way any local agency, including the Games and Amusements Board, could stop the event.

Salud said the contract for the fight has already been signed and only one body, the Nevada State Athletic Commission, has control and jurisdiction over the fight slated Dec. 6 in Las Vegas.

His reaction came after Rep. Rufus Rodriguez urged GAB chair Eric Buhain to temporarily freeze Pacquiao's boxing license to prevent the Filipino ring icon from fighting De La Hoya.

Salud said the suggestion is grossly misinformed and useless.

Salud, founding secretary general of the World Boxing Council, said that even if the NSC wanted to meddle into the event, as suggested by Rufus, the world sanctioning body has no jurisdiction over the event.

Buhain admitted Thursday that he had asked the NSC to cancel the fight because he believed Pacquiao stood no chance against De La Hoya, who is four inches taller and has a five-inch reach edge over the Filipino.

Downplaying Pacquiao's chances, Rodriguez said: "This bout is just about money. Pacquiao has no chance. He's just to protect Hoy. He is a national treasure."

Salud said critics must also bear in mind that despite his shortcomings, Pacquiao and his trainer Freddie Roach would not venture into the fight if they feel they are incapable of having up to the challenge.

According to Salud, critics of the bout should also look back to the fight between the giant Primo Carnera and Joe Louis in 1935. Louis knocked out Carnera.

"I personally feel that Pacquiao will be able to score an upset despite the odds and the undoubted line of several people," said Salud. With a report from AFP

NCA 'Big Event' unfolds

THE NATIONAL COOKOFFS ASSOCIATION (NCA) gears up its first "Big Event" in the magnificent ancient today with the finals of the BIG HOUR cooking derby at the Pinoy City Cookpit.

Five one-day showdowns among Binondo's top cooks are set and the results of the new battle stage of NCA members, according to PCC managers Eric dela Rosa and Butchoy Ilano.

Only stage screened and properly backed by Salgadon, Hubbi, Gl. Pagtu, Lipbi and Bakelan can compete. The stage hosts also be founded and watched by Anthony Bourdain and Rey Vele.

Among NCA members vying for the title are chair Rodolfo Albano, Belen Rosas, Patrick Antonio, Paul Dumlao, Richard Santos, Betsy Uy, Allan Tan, Sonny Uy, Gus Amante, Sony Pierce, Adam Sayo, Betsy Velez Cruz, Eric Velez Rosa, Jonna Uy, Jonny Antonio and Sly Velez. Big tops are set and former governor Jo Nuno.

By Top Chaire
Ai Santa Ana Park

Al-Hussaini, Eagles rule UAAP awards

By Cashell P. Tapao

THEY WERE ACCOLADES THAT WILL ONLY make sense if it came with the ultimate prize.

Season emerged the biggest winner in the UAAP Season 71 awards with six Blue Eagles, led by Most Valuable Player Rabeh Al-Hussaini, enrolled for their meeting form in a season highlighted by their 13-1 elimination round record and a second finals stint in three years.

La Salle had four players bagging awards with JV Casio and Nino Muyang joining Al-Hussaini and teammate Chris Tiu as well as rookie Ateneo setter Jervy Cruz in the UAAP Mythical Seven.

Al-Hussaini also won two awards...Most Improved Player and Champ of the Season.

Shining the limelight with Al-Hussaini was rookie-of-the-year Ryan Buenafe, who was also named to the All-Rookie Team together with teammate Nino Salva.

The nine also named "Mechanical Player," shotblock specialist Sonny Barlos was achieved Defensive Player of the Year and Eric Salamat received the Coach Colonel Award.

"I'm happy for them," said former coach Norman Black. "We had a good mix in the elimination round. Some players improved while others lived up to expectations."

La Salle's Joshua Webb and LA Revilla were also selected to the All-Rookie Team together with UST's Clark Bautista.

In the women's division, UST playmaker Shielaba Barasa grabbed MVP honors.

She was joined in the Mythical Team by Lyceum of the Philippines' Mia Sana Shimizu Tolentino and Safiyya Sudaria, University of the East's Cindy Estrabay and Ateneo's Katherine Bonifel.

Angeleto Ortega of Ateneo bagged the Rookie of the Year award.

Adamson's Mark Kevin Antasia took the junior MVP award, while De La Salle-Zobel's Luigi De La Paz earned Rookie of the Year honors and was named to the Mythical Team.

Completing the Mythical Five are DLSZ's Matthew Capacio and Juan Nicolas Ebarle and Ateneo's Jesus Miguel Tiongson.

SAN Beda's tower of power Sam Ekwe rises over the defense of Jose Rizal U's James Ryan Sena for a scrimmer in the fourth quarter of Sunday's Game 1 at the Araneta Coliseum.
EDWIN CAMARA

Red Lions go for rare NCAA '3-peat' today

By Cashell P. Tapao

SAN BEDA TRIES TO COMPLETE THE first NCAA men's basketball "three-peat" in 12 years when it goes for the jugular against Jose Rizal U today in Game 2 at the Araneta Coliseum.

The Lions took Game 1 and roared as the brink of a 14th championship overall, citing their championship pedigree down the stretch for a 72-69 victory.

But San Beda coach Frankie Lim sounded cautious rather than confident after the Game 1 victory that saw the Lions shake off the Bombers early in the final two minutes.

"I can't be so sure [about the title] because this team we're facing is a hungry team," said Lim, who is hoping to duplicate the feat of San Sebastian, which won three straight titles from 1994 to 1996. That San Sebastian team went on to bag five consecutive crowns.

"They (Bombers) have their own motivation," said Lim. "They haven't won the championship for a long time, and that alone can bring them back to the series."

True enough, the Archers finally left a dent on the Bombers' mettle with coach Ariel "dragonlady" Vanguardia entering the series on Monday, when he celebrates his 50th birthday.

TODAY'S TODAY (Araneta Coliseum)
1 p.m.—Ateneo vs. San Sebastian (JV)
3 p.m.—San Beda vs. JRU (Jrs)

"We're not giving up," said Vanguardia, who is hoping to piece the Bombers to a first title in 36 years.

The Bombers' inability to make their bad shots down the stretch actually hastened their Game 1 defeat. JRU trailed seven of its last eight shootings for an 11-of-28 performance overall.

San Beda also outplayed its height advantage to outrebound JRU, 49-33, with Most Valuable Player Sam Ekwe hauling down 16. The Lions also had 19 second-chance points, 13 more than the Bombers'.

"I think they can't say anymore that we don't have championship experience," Vanguardia said.

"I don't want to give this as an alibi, but it's their (Bombers') first time in the Finals and they were tight. We missed several free throws in the fourth quarter, and it could have been ours. We just have to keep believing that we can win."

San Sebastian gave Ekwe a fourth consecutive jersey retirement against Letran earlier at 2 p.m. in Game 2 of their one-best-of-three series. The Staglets edged the Squires, 81-81, in Game 1.

Toroman: RP caging far better than Iran's

By Jane Navarro

SEOMAN COACH RAJKO TOROMAN finds that Philippine basketball is far better off than the country he led to a first Olympic stint after 60 years.

"The situation here is 10 times better than in Iran," said the 53-year-old Yugoslavian, who steered the nation to the 2007 Nba Asia Championship crown, ensuring one of the two Asian slots in the Beijing Olympics.

"You have better leagues, you have better high school and college systems, and the players are growing up," added Toroman. "Iran doesn't have that."

The Sarajevo Basketball Cup Philippine has brought in Foreman for a two-day visit to oversee the action in the NCAA and UAAP finals and hopefully seal a deal with the foreign coach to spearhead the national team program.

Not enough games

"In Iran, they have some talented players but they don't play enough games. They don't have a coaching plan," said Toroman.

Should Toroman join the federation's roller, SBP executive director Nelf Fuda said the formation of the national team outside of the all-professional squad the Pba would form for the 2009 Nba Asia Championship will commence full on the year-end.

And for a start, Toroman said he would tap the top 10 players from the NCAA and the UAAP and sprinkle the pool with a couple of players from the provinces and the United States.

Fuda said the SBP is seeking a three-year program, with Toroman at the helm, for various international competitions starting with the Southeast Asian Games in Laos this year, the 2010 Asian Games in Guangzhou, China, and the 2010 Nba Asia Championship, the qualifying for the 2012 London Olympics, among others.

"That's our strategy if we make an agreement," said Toroman, who met a height Laney for SP basketball.

"I'm sure that the difference between Iran and the Philippines is not as big. The Philippines has good players, good for next year's World Championship."

The 2002 Toroman, the up-percent of the Basketball Coaches Association of the Philippines in the event Toroman needs the information come his arena.

"We are ready with the materials he asked it," said Fuda, who has met with BCAP head Chito Narvasa to discuss the implementation of Toroman's hiring.

A decision from Toroman is expected before he leaves Manila next week.

"It has to be very close that coach

SEOMAN coach Rajko Toroman (left) with SBP's Nelf Fuda (right) and Smart Sports executive Patrick Gregorio in Wednesday's press conference.

Rajko will not take every step opportunity here Filipino coaches," said Fuda. "He's here to improve our technology to return of basketball coaching."

Opposed to foreign coaches

Except for Ateneo's Norman Black and Tim Cone of Alaska, the BCAP has strongly opposed the hiring of foreign coaches, particularly in the Philippine Basketball Association.

The BCAP sent a legal battle when former Pba exec Ilrell appointed Ateneo last coach John Mcnamara in 2004.

Narvasa said the Serbian coach should present his credentials and his football program for the BCAP to examine.

"There are guidelines that should be followed in hiring a foreign coach," said Narvasa. "We're still discussing them with the SBP."

Toroman, who led the Iranians to an 11th place finish in the Beijing Games, traced as consultant of an export country years ago before jumping into the international coaching bandwagon in the early 1980s.

House slashes PSC allocation by ₱34 million

By Marc Anthony Reyes

PHILIPPINE SPORTS, ALREADY REELING from dismal performances in the last year's Southeast Asian Games and the Beijing Olympics last month, suffered yet another setback after the House of Representatives slashed its budget by ₱34 million.

Philippine Sports Commissioner Hidilyn Diaz yesterday expressed P245 million for 2009, which is lower than the ₱280 million given to the agency for this year.

Bill Enrile said that congressmen "were supportive" of rebuilding local sports and some of them even tried to raise the budget.

Garcia said that while the PSC is not expecting the amount to go up, they are hoping it would get slashed further when it comes under the scrutiny of the Senate and the bicameral committee of both houses.

The PSC initially proposed ₱700 million for 2009 because of its projects lined up for the year, including the Laro ASA Games in December, Batang Pinoy and Palarong Pambansa.

But Congress reportedly earmarked just ₱50 million in the country's Lean 2009.

Unknown Pinoy crashes World Tenball draw

By Mesang P. Castillo

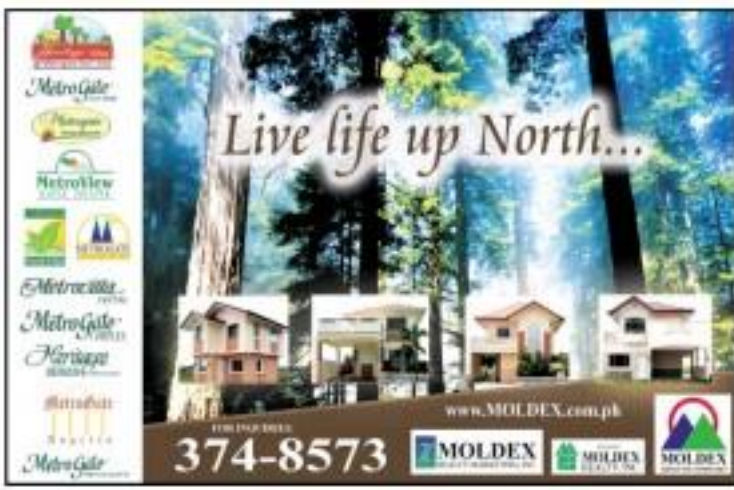
UNBEATABLE FILIPINO MARC MANTES and Chinese Taipei's Wang Kuo-pin topped the second day of qualifying for the main draw of the World Tenball Championship closed to start on Monday.

The 27-year-old Bambino from Antipas did not waste time coming in his final match against Chu Hsi-cong of Chinese Taipei, prevailing, 9-7, to join his team Bambino compatriots in the $400,000 event to be played at the Philippine International Convention Center.

Already assured and expected to carry much of the fight for the Philippines are reigning Asian Games 9-ball king Antonio Gabica, former Asian Open champion Marlon Manalo and Jeffrey de Luna, along with six others.

The charismatic Dyan "Bata" Reyes, Ronnie Alcano and Alex Pagulayan, all former world 9-ball champions, world No. 1 Dennis Orcollo and Robert Gonzes, are not entered in the event due to differences with organizers.

Wang, meanwhile, believes the time is ripe for him to make the move after Chang Ming-wei and Chang Yu-lung. Wang topped countryman Lu Hsi-chun, 9-7.



SPORTS

Mets drop into tie for wild card

NEW YORK—THE NEW YORK Mets squandered a four-run advantage and dropped back into a tie for the National League wild card with a 9-6 loss in extra innings to the Chicago Cubs on Wednesday.

The Mets (87-75), are now tied with the Milwaukee Brewers (87-73), who defeated the Pittsburgh Pirates 9-2, in the race for a NL postseason berth.

"It is critical that we do a better job," Mets manager Jerry Manuel told reporters. "At this juncture, it's just probably not laughed defeat."

The Cubs, who won the NL Central title last Saturday, scored three runs in the 10th inning to break the 6-6 tie.

The Mets had let their ears chomped slip many thought, scoring a three runners in the bottom of the ninth, where third baseman Daniel Murphy led off with a triple.

Murphy, representing the game-winning run, was unable to score after Chicago reliever Bob Howry intentionally walked two batters then pinch-hitter Jeff Francoeur to reload the bases before Murphy ran on home plate.

New York had also left a runner stranded on third during each of the fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth innings.

Carlos Delgado's clutch-hitting proved short for the Mets on top 5-3, but starter Dave Bess lost it in the fifth inning where he allowed four runs.

With just four games remaining, New York is in danger of repeating last year's late season collapse when they lost a seven-game division lead and missed out on the playoffs.

Despite losing 10-6 to the Arizona Rockies, the NL East-leading Philadelphia Phillies (89-75) kept a 1½ game lead over the Mets.

The Los Angeles Dodgers (81-75) beat the San Diego Padres (2-1 and moved their magic number to one in the NL West, meaning one Dodgers' loss or victory Thursday will clinch the division.

In the American League, the Tampa Bay Rays (90-62) moved closer to wrapping up the AL East with an 11-8 victory over the Baltimore Orioles.

The Rays hold a three-game lead over the Boston Red Sox (87-65). The Minnesota Twins (86-72) lost the AL Central lead to Chicago White Sox (86-71) 3-2 to pull within a half game of the division lead. Reuters

SEATTLE Mariners' Raul Ibanez is forced out at second base as Los Angeles Angels shortstop Erick Aybar throws to first in the fifth inning on Wednesday. —

BASEBALL STANDINGS

	W	L
American League		
East Division		
Tampa Bay	90	62
Boston	87	65
New York	84	68
Toronto	77	75
Baltimore	66	86
Central Division		
Minnesota	86	72
Chicago	86	71
Detroit	77	81
Kansas City	67	91
Cleveland	65	93
West Division		
Texas	90	68
Oakland	81	77
Seattle	57	101
NATIONAL LEAGUE		
East Division		
Philadelphia	89	75
New York	87	77
Atlanta	86	77
Florida	76	87
Washington	65	98
Central Division		
Cincinnati	88	75
St. Louis	86	77
Milwaukee	87	73
Houston	74	89
Chicago	70	91
Pittsburgh	54	107
West Division		
San Francisco	89	73
Colorado	81	79
San Diego	81	80
Los Angeles	81	81
Arizona	61	100

PANASONIC OPEN

Juvic, Murakami 6 shots behind Japanese

PAGUNSAN

OSAKA—JUVIC PAGUNSAN AND ATENEO Murakami shot two-under-par 68s Thursday to trail pacesetter Kotaro Ikkos of Japan by six strokes at the start of the Asia-Pacific Panasonic Open here.

Filipino No. 1 Frank'ie Minoza fired a 69 while reigning Philippine Open champion Angelo Que matched par 70 at the blue course of the Hanaki Country Club.

Antonio Lascuña, the ERA Filipino in this $1.65 million tournament co-sanctioned by the Asian Tour and the Japan Golf Tour, had a 71.

Ikkos, a first-time winner in Japan but seeking to end a two-year dry drought, was flawless as he posted eight birdies for a 62 and a one-shot lead over reigning Asian Tour No. 1 Liang Wenp-chong and Australian Marcus Both.

Liang's companion, Zhang Lian-wei was also in the hunt following a 65 which was matched by Korea's Kim Kyung-tae and Ben Mitsuyoshi of Japan.

Current Asian Tour Order of Merit leader Mark Brown of New Zealand was seven-over three hole-back on 66.

Former US Open champion Angel Cabrera of Argentina also shot 2-old while American Fred Couples opened with a 70.

Sela stuns Ferrer in China tilt

ANDY Roddick serves to victory. AFP

HELENG—ISRAEL SELA OF ISRAEL ENDURED No. 1 David Ferrer out of the China Open on Thursday, beating the Spaniard 6-3, 6-3 in the second round.

Sweet, ranked No. 3 in the world and #7 placed ahead of Sela, had a bye into the second round at the Beijing tournament after helping Spain capture the Davis Cup last weekend in the Davis Cup semifinals in Madrid.

Sweet didn't look the success, saying Sela had also played Davis Cup against Peru in order before traveling to China.

Sweet suggested he may have been drained by a grueling five-set Davis Cup win over Australia's Lleyton Hewitt.

Second-seeded Roddick hosted Stanislas Wawrinka 6-4, 6-3 to reach the quarterfinals.

China's home favorite Zheng Jie also gained a quarterfinals berth, beating Ai Sugiyama of Japan 6-1, 6-2. Zheng is the only Chinese woman remaining in the draw after four others lost in the first round.

In another early result, No. 4 Svetlana Kuznetsova of Russia beat countrywoman Alla Kudryavtseva 6-2, 6-3, to reach the quarterfinals.

The China Open is a combined ATP and WTA event. AP

Serrano cops Taiwan junior triathlon title

JOSIAH SERRANO EMERGED the junior champion while two other Filipino bets salvaged silver medals during the recent I-Lan Binnenmeer Lake International Triathlon in Taiwan.

Serrano outclassed 28 other 19-and-under triathletes with a time of 1:04 flat, two minutes and 36 seconds finishing ever-reliable clear of second placer Lee Li Yu-lin of Chinese-Taipei.

Ian Collier Leigh, and the country's top female junior triathlete, Kim Mangrobang, clinched silver medals in the female elite and female junior respectively.

Leigh's time of 2:08:09, was runner-up and 5:9 seconds behind Japan's Masato Takagi and one minute and 29 seconds faster than third placer Joan Cheng of Hong Kong, broke the old 30' record of 2:11:20 established by Imelda Arnaldo last year.

Serrano also won his over-all third junior trophy of 1:04:09.

Mangrobang, who hails from Laguna like Serrano, netted 12th after the swim leg but closed in on the leaders and eventually fell short of beating the leaders' 9th from 9, the gold medalist.

Mangrobang timed 1:08:27.

The trail-boiling but rowdy Serrano came out of the 750-meter swimming in ninth place, clocked in a strong second after the 20-km bike stage and grabbed the lead at the 5-km mark of the 5-km run.

Leigh, engaged overseas swimmer Monte in a three duel in the 10-km swim and 40-km bike legs, but could not keep up with Monte's blistering pace in the 10-km run.

Ateneo, La Salle golfers up

ATENEO AND LA SALLE IMMEDIATELY went after each other's necks as they opened their respective campaigns in the 8th Taiwanese Interscholastic golf championships at the executive course of the Valley Golf and Country Club.

The Blue Eagles and the Green Archers secured up early, similar 164 points in college play while La Salle Green Hills edged ahead of Ateneo by five points in high school play of the three-day tournament.

In forging the collegian deadlock, Gabriel Antonio fired 83 points, Ethel Tan 84 and Ayen Bautista 88 for Ateneo while Charles Ning delivered 86 and Allen Gay and Austin Limpoy each had 78s for La Salle.

Marvic Mendoza (86), Jesar Austria (82) and Joseph Uy (87) posted 337 points for LS-SH and no early rushes in the high school competition as Ateneo managed only 352 through Ross dela Paz's 88, Alex Evangelista's 86 and Mesha Bautista 88.

LSGH flexed its muscle in grade school boys with AR Ramos and Austin Dy scoring 32 points each. The Grenites erected a 20-point lead over Ateneo.

St. Paul squads dominated the combined college/high school series with Beverly Mendoza capturing her 6-1 points, seven under par in great play and the day's best.

Mendoza teamed up with Mona Legaspi (89) for 178, leading another St. Paul team of Amy Salazar and Daniella Uy by 18.

Landen among the boys were Moises Gaviola, Mendoza (high school) and Ramos and Uy (grade school) and Mendoza (college/high school), Uy (grade school) and Shahab Yousefani (special division) for the girls.

STI subdues New Era five

DEFENDING CHAMPION STI COLLEGES cripped New Era University 76-73, to clinch the top spot in the crossover semifinals in the 86th Season men's basketball tournament at the Mahati Coliseum.

Wesley forward Ramon Molano came through another double-double performance of 14 points and 10 rebounds to lead the Vic Yniguez-mentored Olympians to a league-best 13-3 win-loss record.

Mac Macabasco and Darryl Mendoza added 10 points apiece for the Olympians, who are seeking back-to-back title with Yniguez and manager Israel De Leon at the helm.

Rommel Pepito and Michael Ocampo finished with 10 points between them for New Era, which dropped to 6-9.

Equally impressive were St. Clare College-Caloocan, which demolished San Sebastian College-Cavite, 80-65; AMA Computer University, which subdued Informatics, 70-71; and Lyceum of Subic Bay, which nipped University of Manila, 77-67.

Rookie Aries Pinthus fired 26 points, Richmond Sibal contributed 16 and Mac Ojada added 13 for the Lions, who passed their Tile win against six losses. The Ateneo Marinos mentored Saints moved up to No. 3 spot.

FIG probing China's 2000 team, too

HE Kexin (left) and Yang Yilin

CHICAGO—(UPDATE) GOLD medal gymnasts aren't the only ones whose ages are getting a closer look.

The investigation into the eligibility of the Chinese women's team at the Beijing Olympics has been expanded to include members of the 2000 squad, which won the bronze medal in Sydney, The Associated Press has learned.

International gymnastics officials are examining whether Yang Yun and Dong Fangxiao, in particular, were old enough to compete.

"If we had a look at all the articles that came before, during and after the games, there were always rumors about the ages of China's athletes in Sydney," Andre Gaudreault, secretary general of the International Federation of Gymnastics Federation, told AP on Wednesday.

No other Chinese names are being investigated, Gaudreault said.

"As this moment in time, we just have concerns about 2000 and 2008," he said. AP

The WORLD

Editor Lorenzo B. Bueno

China scrambles to salvage reputation

Gov't acts to regulate dairy industry, sets up new food testing centers

BEIJING—CHINA WAS SCRAMbling on Thursday to salvage its reputation after tainted milk sickened 53,000 babies and killed four, as UN agencies deployed experts to implicated dairy firms to discredit the public.

The government has set up working groups in nearly every single province, and has enlisted on a sweeping drive to set up a series of new food testing centers and replace outdated equipment, officials said.

"Our quality inspection authorities are required to establish nearly 400 product testing centers within the next two years, and 80 of these will be food testing centers," said Han Lingfei, a senior official at the quality watchdog.

Han was speaking at a food safety conference in Beijing after China and many of its trading partners were reached by revelations that milk powder and other Chinese-made dairy products were contaminated melamine.

Melamine is mainly used for making plastic but when added to milk, the rank chemical astounder it appear richer in protein.

Wanted on what we've seen to the press I would say, this looks like an attempt to deceive the public by milk producers who seem to be trying to water down their milk," said Dale Buscema, a Beijing-based spokesperson for Unicef, the UN's children agency.

Unicef earlier issued a statement with the World Health Organization, saying it had "observed with great sadness and concern the unfolding story of tainted infant formula produced by Sanlu and other companies."

"While any attempt to deceive the public in the area of food production and marketing is unacceptable, deliberate contamination of foods intended for consumption by vulnerable infants and young children is particularly deplorable," the statement said.

Han, of the product quality agency, told a Beijing conference that a new food safety inspection system was newly needed.

"China is a large food-producing country, and the number of food items needed to be tested is growing very fast," he said.

More than a dozen countries have ordered a ban on China-made milk products or taken other steps to curb contamination. AFP

WorldBriefs

Ex-Thai PM loses arrow

BANGKOK—Thailand's Supreme Court upheld a two-year jail sentence on Thursday in a defamation case against former Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej, who was recently forced to resign for violating the constitution. Samak, who remains free for the verdict, was stunned by the court's decision and lost his balance. Two court aides caught his arms to prevent him from falling. The court said it saw no reason to suspend the jail term handed down last year by the Criminal Court, which convicted Samak of defaming a former deputy mayor of Bangkok during a television talk show in January 2008. AP

Iraq hunts for Qaida gunmen

BAGHDAD, IRAQ—Iraqi forces launched a major hunt on Thursday for al-Qaida gunmen in the restive province of Diyala as the death toll rose to 26 from an ambush of police in an ox-chard. Soldiers backed by commandos are combing the area, Interior ministry spokesperson Brig. Gen. Abdel Karim Khalaf said in the wake of Wednesday's attack, one of the deadliest against police in this region. The attackers shot dead 12 policemen and eight with Qaida fighters, according to an initial toll. Iman mayor Hadi Abdullah said on Thursday that another 15 wounded policemen were discovered on arrival at a hospital in Baghdad. AFP

Japan's new PM off to UN

TOKYO—Japan's new Prime Minister Taro Aso arrived Thursday in New York for a United Nations summit in New York less than a day after taking office, hoping to show Japan as an active global player. Aso, a conservative former foreign minister, flew out to address the UN General Assembly later Thursday New York time. He is the first Japanese premier to go to the UN summit in three years due to political turmoil in Tokyo. Aso, who has also become chair of the Group of Eight major industrial powers, was expected to offer a role by Japan in curbing the planet's rapid turmoil. AFP

'Taking world for a fool'

JERUSALEM—Israeli President Shimon Peres interpreted his attack on Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad on Thursday, accusing him of "taking the world for a fool" in his statements to the UN General Assembly. "Ahmadinejad's has committed a fatal error, and by taking the world for a fool, he thinks he is an absolute prophet, proclaiming that there is no more hope for the United States or Israel," Peres told Israeli radio. Israel has long considered Iran its greatest threat, both because of Tehran's accelerating nuclear program and repeated statements by its leaders predicting the demise of the Jewish state. AFP

Pressure on Catholic protesters

MANILA—Communist rebels on Thursday stepped up the pressure in a long-simmering land dispute with the country's Catholics by authorizing the construction of public parks on two key sites claimed by the Church. Catholics have for months staged prayer vigils in the capital's busy Ayala Avenue and Edsa, the main highway cutting through the metropolis. Edsa was the scene of mass protests in 1986 that led to the ouster of then dictator Ferdinand Marcos. The communist rebels joined them in the anti-Marcos revolt. In 1994, Vietnamese officials earlier that the Church donated the land to the state more than half a century ago, a claim the Catholics have denied. AP

DANGEROUS RIDE
Fishermen or their wooden boat try to cross waves in Bantul, Yogyakarta, on Thursday. An official from the local meteorological bureau said barometers as high as four meters are still affecting some parts of Indonesia, making it dangerous for fishermen out at sea. AFP

Obama rejects call of McCain to delay election debate

WASHINGTON—DEMOCRAT Barack Obama rejected Republican opponent John McCain's stunning and surprise call for a delay in their upcoming debate as the Arizona senator announced he planned to suspend his campaign and return to Washington to focus on the United States financial meltdown.

The two candidates later issued a joint statement in which they said the American people are facing a time of economic crisis.

Speaking of the $700-billion plan the administration has proposed to bail out the financial industry, the candidates said the proposal is flawed, but that the effort to protect the US economy must not fail.

The proposal drew measures between President George W. Bush ad. dressed the US in a televised speech, warning that the US faces a "long and painful recession" if Congress fails to act. He said "our entire economy is in danger."

Increasingly important

The three presidential debates between the candidates—the first one of for Friday night (Saturday morning in Manila)—were becoming increasingly important as US voters face economic uncertainty but McCain's announcement left the question of whether they will hold their first debate in doubt.

Obama, who seemed taken aback by McCain's move to delay the debates, asserted American voters needed to hear the candidates' views "now more than ever."

"It's my belief that this is exactly the time when the American people need to hear from the person who, in approximately 40 days, will be responsible for dealing with this mess," Obama said at a news conference in Downtown, Florida, speaking before the joint statement was issued.

Part of the job

"It's going to be part of the president's job to deal with more than one thing at once," he added.

McCain said he was putting the good of the country ahead of politics, but his announcement was clearly a political move. It was an attempt to undermine Obama on an issue—the economy—that has been hurting McCain as his rival continued to gain in polls.

The candidates' conflicting positions arose after they spoke privately about how to facilitate congressional negotiations on the Bush administration's $700 billion economic bailout proposal.

But McCain beat Obama to the punch with the flat public statement, saying the Bush plan is too big-the $ 700 billion economic rescue headed for debate and a bipartisan solution was needed urgently. AP

Chinese astronauts ready for 1st space walk

JIUQUAN—CHINA COUNTED DOWN Thursday to its third manned space mission which for the first time will include a space walk—a feat as risky as it is prestigious for the rising Asian power.

Zhai Zhigang, an air force colonel who grew up in extreme poverty in China's bleak northeast, is expected to carry out the 30-minute space walk on Friday or more likely Saturday, according to state media.

The Long March 2F rocket carrying the Shenzhou VII spacecraft is scheduled to blast off from Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in northwest China between 9:07 p.m. and 10:27 p.m. on Thursday.

Its mission: a 68-hour journey in space and back, including the walk while it circles 343 kilometers above Earth.

"We have the confidence, the determination and the ability to take the Chinese people's first steps into space," said one of the three astronauts, Jing Haipeng, referring to the space walk.

Getting comfortable with the art of spacewalking is a crucial next step in China's most immediate space-related ambition: to build a permanent space lab.

By 2010 two more unmanned craft will have been sent up, as well as another manned spaceship with a crew of three to start work on the lab, according to the China Daily.

Vice President Xi Jinping,—widely seen as China's likely next leader when political power changes hands in four years,—was due to meet the astronauts two and a half hours before take-off, the China Daily said.

In Beijing, foreign ministry spokesperson Qin Gang said the mission was part of China's effort to "explore and make peaceful use of outer space."

The astronauts, led by 41-year-old Zhai, have trained together for over a decade, but the mission is not without its risks, notably the space walk. AFP

CHINESE astronauts (from left) Jing Haipeng, Zhai Zhigang, and Liu Boming salute in front of a Chinese national flag during a news conference at the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center on Wednesday. The crews, led by Air Force Colonel Zhai, will carry out China's first space walk. Reuters

FORMER Beatles star Paul McCartney poses with a fan after a visit to the Nativity Church in Bethlehem on Wednesday. McCartney arrived in the region for a historic concert. Reuters

Finland fears copycat school shootings

SAJUSAARI, FINLAND (AFP) Just days after a deadly school shooting, the country's police chief warned on Thursday an investigator probed a growing list of online admirers between two closely rampages in less than a year.

Police Commissioner Mikko Paatero told Finnish MTV3 that police would increase their monitoring of YouTube and other Internet sites where the gunmen in both shootings posted clips foreshadowing the attacks.

On Tuesday, 22-year-old Matti Juhani Saari killed 10 people before shooting himself in a Helsinki suburb in which 14 people died in November. 18-year-old Pekka-Eric Auvinen fatally shot eight people and himself in his school in southern Finland.

Asked whether he thought the attacks would inspire more school shootings, Paatero said: "I badly fear it's possible."

In neighbouring Sweden, police arrested a 16-year-old boy for illegal weapon possession after receiving a tip about a video clip he had posted on YouTube.

Police raided the teen's home in Kisping, central Sweden, after seeing the YouTube clip, according to police spokesperson Boje Stromberg. He couldn't immediately confirm the contents of the clip.

Swedish police urged people to report any offensive, threatening, or criminal material they find on the Internet.

"There may also be reasons to inform police about material on the Internet that can be seen as warning signals of planned crimes," national police said on Thursday on its website.

In Finland, investigators said Saari sent and hand likely bought their guns at the same place and could even have been in contact with each other.

"Their actions seems so similar that I would consider it a miracle if we did not find some connecting link," Jari Sinkkonen was quoted as telling the Finnish newspaper HT.

Both gunmen posted violent clips on YouTube before the shootings, both were fascinated by the 1999 Columbine school shootings in Colorado, both articulated their own suicide and both died after shooting themselves in the head.

The government pledged to tighten Finland's gun laws. AP

IN THIS ISSUE

- Philex gets full control of Boyongan property /B3
- UBS sees peso at 44 to $1 in '09 /B5

BUSINESS

Editor Raul G. Marvelo • Assistant Editor Corrie S. Mariano

ten tech items

7-month trade gap balloons to $5.34B

INQUIRER MONITOR

Over 38M Pinoys employed in more than one job (2007)

Gov't blames soaring prices of oil, rice, steel

By Michelle V. Ramos

THE TRADE DEFICIT FOR THE FIRST SEVEN MONTHS SOARED more than 200 percent year-on-year as imports were bloated by higher oil, rice and steel prices, the National Statistics Office reported yesterday.

Figures from the National Statistics Office also showed that the deficit had also risen almost 80 percent for the month of July from the same period last year.

The office said in a statement that the gap between imports and exports from January to July was $5.34 billion compared with $1.63 billion in the same period last year.

Imports rose 36 percent to $31.65 billion in July compared with the same period last year, bringing total imports since January to $31.28 billion, 16.6 percent higher than the same period last year.

The July import figures brought the country's trade deficit to that month to $1.41 billion, or 77.6 percent higher than the deficit in July last year.

Mineral fuels, lubricants and other related materials were the country's single biggest import in July at $1.76 billion, or 30.2 percent of the total.

This marked a 71.6-percent increase from the same period last year, the NSO said.

Second biggest imports were electronic products, formerly the country's biggest import, with $1.74 billion, or 29.8 percent of the total. This was a 17.4-percent decrease from the same period last year.

Such electronic items are key components in the country's own electronics businesses, which is its largest export.

T-MARKETS/B2

CURRENCIES

OPTIMEX
PESO-DOLLAR RATE
₱ 46.45 = $ 1
As of 5 p.m., Sept. 25, 2008

STOCK MARKET
PSE COMPOSITE INDEX

Click stock market report on Page B2

Stocks up 2.23%

THE STOCK MARKET CLOSED SHARPLY higher yesterday as investors flocked to companies considered as safe havens during rough times.

The stock market's gains were led by Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT), which accounted for 29.5 percent of total turnover at ₱711.48 million of the 72.4 billion worth of trades.

PLDT jumped 2.3 percent or ₱50 to close at ₱2,045 a share and accounted for 20 points of the total market's overall gains.

The Philippine Stock Exchange index surged 56.35 points or 2.23 percent to 2,585.32.

The index's spike was the opposite of what happened on Wall Street, which lost 29 points overnight as uncertainties over the fate of a $700-billion rescue package for troubled American financial institutions sewed congressional debates.

The broader all shares index also climbed 28.58 points or 1.82 percent to 1,601.75. There were 81 gainers against 27 losers.

"Fund managers are now realizing that our market has less risk than the US market," said Eddie Ildefonso, president at Lucky Securities Inc.

T-MARKETS/B2

MONETARY TIGHTENING SEEN TO END

Bangko Sentral says consumer demand easing

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS has seen signs of "cooling" demand despite 17-year high consumer price increases, boosting expectations that the economy's inflation rate was indeed cresting its peak.

But while this also suggested that the monetary-tightening cycle may soon end, the financial markets still expected an increase of 25-50 basis points in the central bank's interest rates for the rest of this year to counter the inflationary impact of recent typhoons and the peso's weakening against the dollar.

Based on the minutes of the Aug. 28 policy-making meeting of the Monetary Board released yesterday, the BSP said selected demand indicators had suggested "a slight moderation in demand conditions."

For instance, the report noted an increase in the residential and office vacancy rates in the first quarter in the Makati central business district relative to a year ago as rents went up.

It added that energy sales of Meralco dipped 1 percent in June, a reversal of the 5.4-percent growth in the same month a year ago. Meanwhile, first semester energy sales expanded at a slower pace of 1.9 percent from 6.2 percent in the same period last year.

The report also noted that factories in the country merely maintained their capacity utilization of 90.9 percent, although it indicated a gradual upward starting January this year.

The production value of these factories grew at a slower rate of 9.3 percent in June from a year ago from the revised growth rate of 10.8 percent in May. Volume of output also grew at a slower 5.1 percent in June from 7.9 percent in May.

Another indicator cited was the slower year-to-date growth in local appliance sales of 9 percent from 11 percent to the same period last year.

But the report noted that vehicle sales improved in July, boosted by fleet account sales and promotional offers.

Other key indicators that suggested "cooling" demand were the bearish sentiment of consumers and businesses based on the BSP's quarterly expectation surveys and the slower-than-expected domestic economic growth of 4.6 percent in the second quarter.

The next policy rate setting of the Monetary Board is on Oct. 9. The BSP's policy-making body has raised its benchmark interest rate, the overnight borrowing rate, by a total of 100 basis points (or a percentage point) to 6 percent in the last three months.

The country's inflation hit 12.5 percent in August, bringing the eight-month average to 9.6 percent. The BSP sees inflation for the whole year to average closer to the lower end of its 9-11 percent band from its previous range.

Now, it's mid-October for 1st Galoc oil

By Ruzzel W. Domingo

AUSTRALIAN FIRM NIDO PETROLEUM says oil from the Galoc field was now expected to start flowing in mid-October as it moves to rebuild newly repaired subsea structures using equipment that can withstand harsher weather.

Nido has a 22.28-percent participating interest in the Galoc project, which was originally announced to start production in April, but the date was pushed several times until most recently to mid-September due to bad weather.

Company deputy managing director Joanne Williams said in a statement that the structure at the Galoc field in offshore Palawan was currently poor due to the passage of Typhoon "Nina."

"A new support vessel GSO Ventures is due to arrive in Belize (Sept. 26) and is capable of operating in more adverse sea states than the Discoverer Topaz, which is currently in Belize," Williams said.

She said the arrival of GSO Ventures should minimize the potential for further delays in the remaining work in Galoc.

Separately, project operator Galoc Production Co. said subsea fittings would be reinstalled once the vessel arrived and provided there was favorable weather.

"The remaining activities before first oil are expected to take approximately 6-8 days, given suitable weather conditions," Nido said.

Also, Nido said it was not targeting a new exploration well called Tindalo-1, which is some 5.5 kilometers from Galoc-1 where it found oil—the first discovery of Philippine oil in 14 years.

Jose Emmanuel de Dios, Nido chief executive, said that while there was still another exploration well to drill under Service Contract No. 14, the early success with Galoc-1 supported Nido's strategic decision to focus

NOW/B3

PATROL

NISSAN

Megaworld, Banco de Oro sign P5-B financing deal

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lazaro

MEGAWORLD CORP HAS SIGNED a P5-billion financing deal with Henry Sy-owned Banco De Oro Unibank Inc. that would give home buyers the option to tap the bank for financing to pay the balance of projects about to be turned over to the buyer.

Megaworld said the financing agreement was a landmark deal for both parties and was the biggest of its kind in the industry to date.

Megaworld executive director Kingson Sian said in a telephone interview that under the deal, Megaworld could refer home buyers to BDO prior to the issuance of seniti to make available financing options to pay the balance of the cost of the unit the buyer acquired.

The deal also allows Megaworld to sell its "receivables" or unbuildable loans home buyers to BDO.

The program aims to effectively unlock liquidity for Megaworld and allow it to fast-track its residential projects.

Megaworld continues to be optimistic about the property market, projecting reservation sales from all its projects to hit P24 billion by year's end.

Lesson on national interest

WHO CARES WHAT THE REST of the world may say when the national interest is at stake?

This must have been the guiding principle of the US government when it intervened in the ex-cess Wall Street meltdown that has permanently scarred the international business landscape.

In defiance of the laissez-faire rules of capitalism, US Treasury authorities took control of mortgage-finance giants Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, and lent $85 billion (in exchange for control) to American International Group to prevent its collapse.

These unprecedented moves prompted an American financial analyst to say "Welcome to the USSRA—the United Socialist States Republic of America."

Not content with these actions, the US Securities and Exchange Commission responded by "30 days the short selling of select financial stocks.

The suspension is aimed at preventing the value of these stocks from further dropping as speculators take advantage of the instability in the capital markets.

The moves changed the trading rules in the US stock market in the middle of the game—a big no, no in a free-market economy that the US has been advocating for years to the international community.

If any of these actions were taken by a developing country, the International Monetary Fund would have had no time criticizing it for violating the rules of free trade, market economy and globalization.

At the height of the 1997 Asian financial crisis, then Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad imposed strict capital controls and pegged the exchange rate between the Malaysian ringgit and the US dollar.

The IMF strongly criticized these moves as counterproductive and predicted serious economic and social problems for Malaysia.

Hide in his belief that his action was in his country's best interests, Mahathir stuck to his decision and refused to seek IMF assistance.

As things turned out later, his actions produced positive results. Malaysia took out the IMF financial scares with the least pain to its citizens.

The countries that followed the IMF's advice on coping with the crisis also recovered, but they paid a high price in terms of human suffering and economic deprivation for such obedience.

When a post-crisis assessment was conducted, the IMF grudgingly acknowledged the success of Mahathir's actions without admitting that its solution to the Asian crisis was flawed.

This time around, however, the IMF is soft, almost preworking, on the US as the latter tries to avoid a total collapse of its financial system.

In the country that owns the majority of its capital, the IMF has offered nothing but best wishes for the success of its planned remedial measures. Sigh.

Against criticisms that it ditched the rules on capitalism by throwing a lifeline to distressed financing and investment companies, rather than let market forces determine their fate, the US government's employers response was "national interest."

From its officials' point of view, the American economy would be in very serv ous trouble if the government does not intervene and use taxpayer money to help keep those companies afloat.

Although intend to instead seems to avoid the issues from being resolved, a financial meltdown in the US would have disastrous consequences also to the international business community.

Whether or not those apprehensions are real or exaggerated, one thing is clear—the US government acted on what it believes to be in to and the American people's best interests.

It did what is expected of any self-respecting nation—put the welfare of its people over and above all other considerations, including the adverse reactions of other countries.

No doubt, by going against the principles of a free-market economy that it has espoused for decades, the standing of the US in the financial world suffered a severe blow.

To what if the US loses the moral authority to preach the virtues of free enterprise?

When a nation's stability is at risk, the least of its concerns is how other countries will react to what it has done or plans to do so it can get back on its feet as soon as possible.

The jury is still out on whether the moves taken by the US government, including the $700-billion bailout plan now pending in its Congress, are sufficient to re-energize its economy.

If it does, all those criticisms or misgivings about its actions will be conveniently forgotten. After all, the world always loves a winner.

A different result would have adverse consequences to the international community since the US is the world's biggest economy.

Whatever the way it goes, there is no question that the current events have forced a change in the interpretations and appreciations of the traditionally held principles of capitalism.

They can (and will) be ignored if they conflict with the national interest. The rest of the world can go bust.

As the saying goes, there are no permanent friends or permanent enemies, only permanent interests.

(For feedback, please write to raoulsabi@inquirer.com.ph)

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Philex gets full control of Boyongan property

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lucas

THE BOARD OF COPPER AND GOLD PRODUCER Philex Mining Corp. has approved the company's acquisition of a 50-percent stake in the Boyongan copper-gold property in Dinalupihan from Anglo American Exploration (Philippines) BV for $50 million.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, Philex said this would give it full control of the property as its 66-percent owned subsidiary...Philex Gold Philippines Inc.—already owns the other 50 percent of the property.

The Boyongan project is a joint venture between Philex Gold and the local subsidiary of Anglo American Plc. It is administered through a jointly held company, Sinagtala Mineral Mining Co. It covers a 25,184-hectare property on the Antipas mining district.

The Boyongan deposit was discovered in 2000.

Anglo provided all the funds for exploration, earning its 50-percent interest in the process, and completing 97,300 meters of diamond drilling in 183 holes.

It completed the pre-feasibility study of the Boyongan deposit in December 2007 and in the process discovered other mineral centers.

Anglo later offered its rights to the property to Philex.

"This paves the way for the examined development of Boyongan and the adjacent areas for the best interest of the company," Ramon Sitoplin, Philex vice president for finance said in a disclosure.

With Boyongan's rich copper and gold reserves, Philex said it was confident the mine would start production by 2012.

With the life of Philex's existing mine in Padcal, Benguet, expiring in 2014, the Boyongan mine will ensure that Philex will be able to continue its mining operations for another 15 to 20 years, Sitoplin said.

Philex earlier said it was selling as a block 20 percent of shares it recently bought from the public through the stock market.

The company is engaged in "intensive negotiations with several foreign strategic investors for the sale of these shares."

It did not identify the parties involved.

"At a 20-percent block, these shares command a significant premium over our acquisition cost due to the fact that the acquiring investor can equity account the income of these investments on these shares in their financial statements," Sitoplin had said.

Philex recently acquired from tycoon John Gokongwei and his associated companies 5.4 percent of the company's total issued shares at P7.80 or roughly P1.5 to P1.6 billion.

Investment confidence in RP improved, says report

Philippines' rank in United Nations index of investment destinations up 3 notches

By Roland W. Dennings

THE PHILIPPINES INCHED UP THREE notches to 96th of 141 economies in the United Nation's index of foreign direct investment destinations for 2007.

The UN Conference on Trade and Development's World Investment Report 2008 showed that in the past three years, the Philippines improved its standing as an FDI recipient from 109th in 2003 and 99th in 2005.

As a source of FDI, the country improved to 49th last year from 50th in 2005 and 67th in 2006.

The WIR 2008 also acknowledged efforts of governments to impress investor confidence, especially in Southeast Asia...but warned that the global financial crisis has begun to impact on cross-border investment activities.

UN secretary general Ban Ki-moon said that last year, developing and transition economies attracted more flows than ever, reaching nearly $600 billion or a 35-percent increase over 2006 and a third of the global total.

"While global foreign direct investment flows are projected to decline this year, those to developing and transition economies are expected to suffer less, despite the current financial and credit crisis," Ban said.

The 411-page study, which is the 18th of a yearly series, examines the ways, extent and conditions under which transnational corporations can contribute to meeting the need all developing economies to build necessary infrastructure.

However, Ban cautioned against unrealistic expectations about the contributions of TNCs to an economy's progress.

"Companies will only invest in infrastructure projects that can ensure adequate returns for commensurate risks," he said.

"It has proved difficult for countries with small economies and weak governance systems to attract transnational corporations into infrastructure," he added.

Ban said the challenge posed on government policy-making was to create the appropriate conditions to facilitate investments that can contribute to poverty alleviation and accelerated development.

The report's highlights on the Philippines included having food and beverage giant San Miguel Corp. among the top 100 nonfinancial TNCs from developing economies.

Also, International Container Terminal Services Inc. was included in the 50 top infrastructure TNCs from developing economies in terms of foreign assets with $287 million of its $385 million in total assets invested in foreign lands.

Included in a 2007 list of cross-border merger and acquisition transactions worth over $3 billion was the $3.4-billion deal between American firm Mirant Corp. and a Japanese group.

A related report, titled the World Investment Prospects Survey 2008-2010, showed that Southeast Asia—along with South and East Asia—remained the top preferred region for investments.

Among the factors that attract FDI to the region were market growth, availability of cheap labor, buoyant economic growth prospects, better regional integration and noticeable improvements in the business environment for foreign companies.

Cesar B. Bautista, co-chair of the National Competitiveness Council, said last August the Philippines may be back among the top one-third economies of the world within two years, particularly if efforts to create a favorable environment for business continued.

Bautista said the NCC also aims to attract $10 billion next year in investments that would drive 10-percent growth in export earnings and up to 4-percent growth in gross domestic product.

Curbing corruption in agriculture

By Ernesto M. Ordoñez

IN MY SEPT. 3 COLUMN TITLED "Agriculture Ahead of Industry," I noted that the Department of Agriculture (DA) was way ahead of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) in terming a sixty percent increase in anti-smuggling task force Bantay Manibela.

COMMENTARY

The DA's advance information identifies potential smuggled and smuggled products.

Last September 9, the BOC intelligently speculated that this was because there was more smuggling money to be made in unlawfully dues in agriculture; hence, BOC's business to accommodate DTI.

There is another area where agriculture is ahead of industry. That is in the institutionalization of a shared governance system between the government and private sector in the planning, monitoring and review of government programs.

Councils

On Jan. 30, 1987, the National Agriculture and Fisheries Council (NAFC) was established under Executive Order 116. As stated in its original, prioritized, consultative and collaborative body, it is created "as an advisory body to the regional, provincial, municipal and barangay councils on agriculture and fisheries development through consultation, advocacy, planning, monitoring and project evaluation."

The DTI does not have a similar structure. However, DTI officials have been pushing for and being lobbied DA which it comes to corruption charges.

Lately there have been many which have merited front page headlines.

We have recommend that the institutionalized Agriculture and Fisheries Councils (AFCs) should be immediately functional to curb corruption. This is specially true in the area of the huge budget increase being proposed for the DA next year.

In the table (right), we have compared the actual and proposed budgets of the DA with that mandated by the Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act (AFMA). It will only be in 2009 when the proposed DA budget will conform to the mandated AFMA budget, and exceed it by P4.1 billion. This amount is P96.3- billion, or 5% percent more than the 2008 budget.

The Alyansa agrikultura has long advocated continuity with the AFMA mandated amounts. But this should be conditioned on providing transparency safeguards to curb corruption.

This is where the NAFC comes in. A close-key NAFC function is to "monitor agriculture and fisheries programs of all government agencies." There is legal basis for this, found in DA Administrative Order 6, 1998: "The NAFC should 'assist the DA in the monitoring and coordination of the agriculture and fisheries modernization process.'"

Undulfilled mandate

Despite the above, the NAFC has never been given the opportunity to systematically monitor the DA budget. This important function is not included in the usual regular activities found in the NAFC guidelines, nor does it form part of the stated NAFC strategic plan.

From the time the Alyansa first recommended that NAFC undertake this activity (published in the business column "Political Will and Private Sector Involvement" as early as Oct. 3, 2003), this recommendation has always received lukewarm support. Alyansa leaders believe that much of the corruption that has taken place could have been averted had the AFCs undertaken this role, which is an essential part of its mandate.

Aside from the national body, there are 16 regional, 77 provincial and 1,392 municipal agriculture and fisheries councils. Today, these councils look at limited agricultural projects, but not the total agricultural programs and budget.

If AFCs are allowed to monitor the entire plan, the private-sector AFC members can even collaborate greatly in making corruption. This will even help DA in that, as some DA officials contend, specific corrupt practices practiced by certain municipal agricultural officials under local government supervision will be properly attributed to them, and not to the DA.

Larger budget, more corruption?

As the Congress deliberates on the proposed increase in the DA budget over the next few weeks, it should consider that the absence of transparency safeguards may merely translate this large increase into more corruption. But if Congress makes this increase conditional on private sector monitoring done through the AFCs and other such safeguards, then the increased DA budget will be the blessing the farmers and fisherfolk have long been waiting for.

(The author is chair of Agrinnovate, former secretary for presidential flagship programs and projects, and former undersecretary for Agriculture, and Trade and Industry. For inquiries and suggestions, e-mail agriwatch.ph@yahoo.com or cellular (632) 8722112.)

DA BUDGET

Years	ACTUAL/ PROPOSED	AFMA MANDATED	DIFFERENCE
2004	P53.8B	P54.2B	-P0.4B
2005	P54.1B	P54.2B	-P.3B.1B
2006	P53.9B	P54.2B	-P.3B.8B
2007	P58.2B	P54.2B	P4.0B
2008	P54.0B	P54.2B	-P.8B.8B
2009 (PROPOSED)	P98.2B	P54.2B	+P4.1B

Banking on 48 years of innovation

By Raquel P. Gomez

PSBank, a key player in consumer banking in the Philippines, has redefined what consumer banking is all about in the current era of fast-paced society and a world getting tech-savvy.

PSBank continues to innovate the consumer banking to offer the highest level of convenience to consumers. PSBank president Pascual Garcia III said the bank over the years has introduced innovative banking products with features that are tailor-made to the needs of consumers.

For example he said only at PSBank can a car loan borrower get his or her loan processed within 24 hours. A home mortgage loan borrower will be able to know the status of his or her loan within five days. Not only that, borrowers can also receive text messages informing them of the status of their loan applications. Then there's also the innovative product called Money Card that allows consumer borrower access to low-interest funds through a card that functions like an ATM.

Technology, facilities, solid infrastructure and processes are the key components in making the consumer loan products or PSBank efficient and reliable for consumers according to Garcia.

"We provide great value to the consumers through our products. We have superior technology infrastructure in place nationwide. We have a credit evaluation system that is advanced. The processes that we implement, all the way down to credit verification of borrowers, are very highly automated. And the element of speed of the processing of the loan products satisfies the requirement of so many buyers," said Garcia.

"We've crafted our products to make it very convenient and cost effective for the consumer."

Just recently, PSBank has purchased an IBM Z9 mainframe that will help the bank serve its clients better. With the new technology in place, consumers will benefit. We have a strong banking network and they will also enjoy accolades from the financial community.

As a savings bank that caters to the needs of consumers and small to medium enterprises, PSBank offers a range of products that include mortgage, auto loans, personal loans and business loans. PSBank is very much involved in E-banking and Treasury services as well.

The bank continues to expand with four more branches to be opened in the next six months in Puerto Princesa, Palawan; Batangas, Bataan and Bulacan, Aguinaldo Norte. The additions will make PSBank's branch network to 167 nationwide. Currently PSBank ATMs number to 182 networks.

Long before the banks rotes focused on the overseas working Filipinos, PSBank has put importance on this sector. Seven years ago when it launched its remittance program for them. Garcia said the bank has prioritized this sector, making the OFWs and their families avail loans faster and hassle-free.

"As a savings bank, we aim to bring our customers closer to their dream of owning a car, owning a home and making their business. For the overseas Filipinos, it means making their financial needs no matter the distance and time zone."

PSBank celebrates its 48th anniversary today. It ranks well among the banks in the region, enjoying a robust and healthy financial state. The bank's total assets as of June stood at P88.8 billion, which is 9-percent higher than the June 2007 level of $3.8 billion. Total deposits also continue to grow posting a 9 percent increase to P65.2 billion during the same period last year. The loan deposit portfolio continued to improve also.

The bank's core business remained strong during the first half of the year, with interest income from loans jumping by 16 percent to P2.3 billion from P1.9 billion during the comparative period last year. This was also evident in the 16 percent rise in the total loan portfolio to P39 billion from P33.7 billion the previous year.

"I am very pleased with the results for the first half of the year given the difficult economic scenario that we are facing right now. From my own perspective, we are much stronger than last year when the bank benefited from good trading results. Our balance sheet expansion is in the right direction and points to a more consistent growth and income trend in the long run," according to Garcia.

PSBank was established in 1960 as Philippine Savings Bank. Its first branch was in Plaza Miranda, Quiapo, Manila. Metrobank acquired the savings bank in 1985. Soon the bank's name was shortened to PSBank.

Fast processing of auto and housing mortgage loans

PSBank continues to innovate consumer banking to offer the highest level of convenience to consumers

PSBank president Pascual Garcia III

Alabang viaduct rehab nears completion

By Rizz T. Ochoa Jr.

THE FIRST PORTION OF THE South Luzon Expressway Interchange and upgrading, covering the 1.2-kilometer Alabang Viaduct, will be completed by December, South Luzon Tollway Corp. said.

The viaduct upgrade forms part of the rehabilitation and upgrading of the entire SLEX stretch.

SLTC said all piers and footing for the substructure had been completed and the widening of the six-lane bridge to eight lanes was almost complete.

Company president Isaac David advanced that the huge volume of vehicle traffic and the rainy season had caused construction activities in other sections of SLEX. The company came up with a catch-up plan so it could meet the March 2009 deadline for the entire project.

Project engineers said that priority in the construction was given to the five bridges and most of the four-lane roadway had been widened to eight lanes. But subsequent earthworks has slowed down because the SLEX rehabilitation required the excavation and complete removal of the deteriorated pavement down to rock base—some two feet deep in some areas.

DPWH and SLR engineers however, have declared concessionaire progress satisfactory and they expect faster work pace as dryer weather sets in toward the end of the year.

UBS sees peso at 44 to $1 in '09

By Doris C. Dumlao

INVESTMENT BANK UBS SEES the peso floating up at 44 to the dollar by the end of 2009 on the back of the expected softening of global commodity prices and a continued interest rate increases by the local central bank.

"While the Philippines sees as one of the key beneficiaries of lower commodity prices, the peso ought to get a lift if commodity prices would stabilize or fall. At the same time, because of remittances from foreign overseas workers, the current account surplus remains positive, unlike that of Thailand and Indonesia," UBS said in a research note released yesterday.

UBS also sees weak bearing in mind that a key part of the US government's efforts are to allow banks to lend again and lessen the effect of the credit crunch on the economy.

"Whether US borrowers are in a position to borrow is another matter, but the yield on credit securities and associated risk premia should fall. This should increase the attractiveness of Asian (Ammunition of South-east Asian National) equity markets and certain bond markets," the research note said.

"With the US returning to a likely protracted slowdown scenario with low yields, the extremely high-yielding currencies in the Asian could benefit...assuming we have learned into our lessons," it noted.

UBS said inter monetary tightening was likely in the Philippines and Indonesia.

Central banks tighten monetary policy...such as by raising key interest rates or the reserves that banks are required to place in low-yielding instruments—when they see the need to mop up excess liquidity that could fuel consumer and business spending.

"Here, non-commodity price inflation pressures are more enormous and in the case of the Philippines, a higher interest rate will help stabilize the currency," UBS said.

"A high foreign currency debt stock means the Philippine government will want to avoid excessive currency weakness if possible. In Indonesia, with high inflation in the context of a current account deficit will look to encourage the authorities to keep raising the interest rate," it said.

Saprolite-Mina deal OKd

By Arny B. Ross

NIHAO MINERAL RESOURCES International Inc. yesterday said the government had approved the transfer to its subsidiary of another mining firm's exploration permit, which covers a nickel-mining area in Zambales.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, Nihao said the Mines and Geosciences Bureau had issued an order approving the assignment of Saprolite Mining Inc.'s exploration permit to Mina Verde Gracia Inc.

The permit covers 5,000.84 hectares of mining area in Iba and Botolan, Zambales, known as the Botolan Mining Claim.

The area is among the mining concessions covered by the controversial agreement that Nihao had signed with Georgex Resources Philippines Inc. and Jiangxi Rare Earth and Rare Metals Tungsten Group Co. of China.

Under the agreement, the three firms had agreed to form a strategic partnership to jointly explore and develop the Botolan nickel mining concession covering a total of 32,695.6 hectares, which an other disposed or indirectly held by Mr. Jun and Georgex.

The disclosure also stated that Saprolite and Mina Verde had entered into a deed of assignment in July 2007, wherein the former had assigned all its rights and interest in the Botolan Mining Claim to Nihao's subsidiary.

In February this year, however, the MGB issued to Saprolite an exploration permit covering the claim. While the registration of the deed of assignment was pending for MGB approval, a supplemental agreement was inked by Saprolite and Mina Verde on July 1 this year.

Under the supplemental agreement, the two mining firms confirmed and reiterated the assignment of JP to Mina from Saprolite.

Nihao is a mineral exploration, development and production firm focuses on nickel laterite projects.

Nihao has been granted rights to explore more than 6,000 hectares in Botolan, Zambales, one of the country's top five nickel-rich regions.

SCB unit in RP says it is in 'great shape'

THE LOCAL UNIT OF BRITISH banking giant Standard Chartered, which has a P1.2-billion loan exposure to special purpose vehicles owned by Lehman US investment bank Lehman Brothers, is well-positioned in a strong financial position amid a global financial meltdown.

"For client confidentiality reasons, we do not comment on exposure to individual counterparties. We would like to assure you that Standard Chartered Bank remains strongly capitalized and very liquid," SCB head of corporate affairs Gina Lopez said in a text mail to the business.

"The bank is in great shape, and we have no direct exposure to the kind of issues that led to the current crisis," she said. "Our markets are predominantly in Asia, Africa and the Middle East where growth and robust demand for products and services remain robust."

The business reported that SCB's exposure to Lehman was to the form of loans to its SPVs, which had bought bad assets of other banks. These SPVs were identified as Philippine Investment I and Philippine Investment II, Aegerum Real Estate Investments Inc., Gold 968 1 Bird, Gold 968 Bird, Lobo Steel Estate, Asiaco Investments and Gold Bird Investments.

The eight SPVs were not included in the purview for protection against creditors filed by Lehman in the US when it recently declared bankruptcy. They contain assets sold by various banks to Lehman in the last four years.

Apart from loans to these SPVs, sources said SCB's Philippine unit had no exposure to bonds or other sophisticated financial products issued or arranged by Lehman Brothers or its affiliates.

Lehman took out secured loans and foreclosed property at a discount from various Philippine banks using the SPV framework. However, it also borrowed about P5.6 billion from two banks—Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co. and the local unit of SCB—to pay for the purchase of these assets.

Metrobank announced on Monday it had filed a petition to put two of Lehman's SPVs under court-assisted rehabilitation, as part of efforts to recover its investments. It previously disclosed having lent P2.4 billion to two Lehman SPVs—Philippine Investment I and Philippine Investment II.

The SPV Law—which was passed in December 2002 and signed in May this year—helped banks get rid of their nonperforming assets by setting some of the taxes and reducing fees usually collected in the sale or transfer of assets.

Lehman had been actively buying distressed assets across the region, including Korea, Japan, China and Indonesia. Doris C. Dumlao

7-month trade gap . . .

From page B1

Canada were the third largest import item in July, accounting for 8.7 percent of the total or $392.46 million. This was a 133.6-percent increase over the same period last year.

"This was due to the increase in the importation of rice," the NSO said. The Philippines is one of the world's biggest importers of rice, the national staple.

Saudi Arabia was the largest source of imports to the Philippines in July, accounting for 15.9 percent of the total, thanks to the increased prices of oil.

Japan was second with 10.5 percent of the total, while Singapore, with 10.4 percent, was third.

Deputy Director General Augusto Santos of the National Economic and Development Authority said other merchandise products boosted import growth during the month as many companies were beginning to build their inventories in preparation for a demand spike during Christmas.

"This is the cycle that Meralco has been seeing in the past years—companies start to prepare for Christmas in July," Santos said in a phone interview.

Santos said the easing of oil prices in July also led to an increase in demand for other products. He said businessmen in oil prices affect decision of consumers and businesses whether or not to buy more goods deemed as non-essentials.

Higher imports are often regarded by analysts as an indication of export performance in the coming months because a significant portion of imports are made up of raw materials for finished products to be shipped abroad. With a report from AFP

Stocks up 2.23%

From page B1

Hour Lee, analyst at ICC Securities, said investor confidence after the US Treasury's announcement of a $700-billion bailout plan was reflected in the uptick of PLDT shares yesterday.

Investors also picked on battered stocks such as First Generation Corp., which rose 3 percent or P.17, and PHDC Energy Development Corp., which advanced 13.2 percent or 45 centavos to P3.85. E.S. Escosio

Now, it's mid-October . . .

From page B1

tic others and investments in the Southwest Palawan Basin.

The Sibul-1 oil find also supports "the decision to accelerate our shallow water strategy while we continue to evaluate the exploration portfolio," De Dios said.

The well has been suspended pending evaluation of the reservoir quality and this resource extension.

Based on the latest update from Nido, the Sibul-1 deposit was encountered in two reservoirs, one of at least 70 meters, possibly reaching as high as 95 meters.

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FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2008 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER B7-1

BUSINESS Friday

Business/Features Editor Margie Quiroga-Espino

Are my Philam investments safe?

CHARTERED Financial Analyst of the Philippines Director Mark Ta

By Ms. Sales Dupitra
Inquirer.net

CHANCES ARE, YOU'RE worried about your insurance, pre-need plans and investments if you're one of the over one million Filipinos who bought something from the Philippine American Life Insurance Co. (Philamlife), the local subsidiary of troubled American Internation al Group.

That's certain. With the 2007 crisis still fresh in everyone's memory, it doesn't take much for the man on the street to be rattled by news of corporate failures.

With the B-turned sector on the spotlight these days, it's just right that we take a long, hard look at the kind of financial services and products that we buy. Many Fil-

What you need to know about your money

ipinos buy insurance, pension and even investments blindly and trusting, because a friend or family member is the one selling.

Here are things you need to know about your money and lessons that everyone—not just Philam clients—should learn from this whole humbling ride in the financial markets:

1. Your insurance policies, pre-need plans, and investments with Philam are safe in there: AIG is, strictly speaking, not your provider but its subsidiary here in the Philippines. The subsidiary, Philamlife, has paid up capital of P1.65 billion (versus P50 million minimum required by the government). P1.79 billion in consolidated assets, P20 billion in net worth, and P70.4 billion in reserves, based on audited figures. These funds are virtually walled off from the parent company based on local laws.

"Hold on to them. We are meeting our obligations. If you surrender them now, you will lose out. We have no trust fund deficiencies," says Jose L. Cuisia, president and chief executive officer of Philamlife.

Sila Chiong, deputy commissioner at the Insurance Commission, confirmed this, saying: "The matter company can't just get the assets of Philamlife and the company cannot be sold to anybody that is not approved by the local regulators. The Insurance Commission will make sure that every policy that is in force will be serviced."

2. When there's fear on the streets, people hastily believe conspiracies and regulators and worry about the worst that can happen. In worst-case scenarios, any insurance or pre-need company that goes belly up will go through receivership and liquidation, and a third party assigned to service claims by policyholders. In Philippine history, there has been little news of life insurance companies going bankrupt. Sold, yes, but not liquidated. But even if liquidated, if the insurance company has ample assets, it is possible to get 100 percent of your policy, says Chiong.

For non-life policyholders, it's different. Assets in the non-life businesses are mostly short-term in nature. Policyholders may get 100 percent or less than their claims, and delays like one or two years in getting their payments.

If you want to know if your insurance company is in good standing, check whether its name is on the ICI list here (http://www.insurance.gov.ph/lists/_assets/ici.asp). If it's not in the list, surrender your policy and get protection from another company.

3. Industry analysts say Philam's business, being a highly profitable company, will be a very attractive buy in the event of a takeover. Chiong says policies will merely be serviced by the

ACCI Advisors managing director Alfredo Gonzales

imagine design that Performs

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2. A customer may register his/her purchased product only once. Deadline for online product registration is on November 7, 2008.
3. Raffle prizes include one unit each of Samsung LCD Monitor, Mobile Phone, Camera, MP3 player, Action, Printer; One Bodasho Gift Certificate worth P500; and One SM Cinema pass worth P300. Prizes are tax free.
4. Winners of special prizes will be drawn electronically in the presence of a BIR representative on November 11, 2008 at Samsung Electronics Philippines Corporation (SEPCO) office located at 12/F, Ecosentrum Bldg., Ortigas Ave., Greenhills, San Juan, Metro Manila.
5. Promo winners will be notified via e-mail / registered mail and phone call. Prizes may be claimed at Samsung office together with the letter of notification and a valid ID. Redemption period is up to 30 days from the receipt of notification.
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Swiss water firm taps thirst for purity

A GOBA employee monitors the quality of bottled "Wonder" drink at the production line in Queensland near Applecroft

GOSTON, SWITZERLAND—FOR SWISS native Gino Goba, small is beautiful, quality is everything and location is everything else.

It's a philosophy that has worked for many niche water retailers, who are drawing more enthusiasm than larger firms in a market squeezed by the global slowdown and financial turmoil.

Family-owned Goba has created a harmonious symbiosis of the brand and restaurant market in Switzerland—beating heavyweights like Danone and Nestlé—for its pampered mineral water.

The water comes from a natural spring near Mount Saentis in the canton of Appenzell and is bottled in Gossau, a remote municipality of 1,382 people surrounded by hills.

"Somewhat restaurants buy our water because of our good image, mixed, confident and independent," said Gabriela Manser, a dynamic former runway maiden and since 1999 the third generation of her family to run Goba.

Last year, Goba sold 14 million bottles in Switzerland, its only market so far, to earn 12 million Swiss francs ($10.8 million).

That marked an increase from previous years but the pace of growth has slowed. Sales were 11 million Swiss francs in 2006, 10 million in 2005 and 2.3 million in 1999.

Goba also produces soft drinks, including its signature Flauder, an elderflower-flavoured nectar that was inspired by Manser's memories of the elderflower syrup made by grandmothers when she was growing up.

The Swiss company may be a minnow in the global packaged water market—worth around $80 billion a year according to Credit Suisse—but its entry reflects wider trends.

As consumers cut back on food and drink bills because of rising inflation, niche outlet players like Goba, who have built their brand names on exclusivity and purity of supply, have shown more staying power.

Nestlé Waters—which also owns Perrier and San Pellegrino—saw bottled water sales volumes fall 3.1 percent in the first half of this year and Danone's water sales, which include Evian and Volvic, fell 0.8 percent in the second quarter.

However, Starcup's Vets, which sells artesian water to diner, cylindrical bottles, says business is still strong although growth

(PAGE B2)

Are my Philam investments safe?

From page B2-1

buyer, but investment types like variable unit linked products may be riskier than traditional types.

Mark Yu, director of the Chartered Financial Analysts of the Philippines, says he doesn't see a scenario where investors/policyholders will suffer a total loss. "Look into the ability of the insurance company to improve their liquidity should they need to; two, see if there are reinsurers that diversify the risks; and three, contemplate about surrendering the policy and getting what they can out of it," he says.

If you have policies with an investment portion, look at your cash value and decide whether you want to cash it now or ride it out.

"Cashing in now entails taking a hit on your previously invested capital. You have to look at it in the context of your total portfolio. If it's just 5 percent of your portfolio, ask yourself, can I afford to lose 5 percent, take it out now and transfer get only 3 percent of to other? If you are going to take it out, where are you going to put it? In another insurance firm that might fold up too and not get the same support from the fed as AIG?" says Yu.

4. For investors in Philam Asset Management Inc. (Philam), the true business of Philamlife, you are more likely to lose money if you take out your funds now, because the market is down. Says Rigoffy Gonzales, managing director of ACE Advisors, an independent financial advisory firm, the worst that investors can do now is to sell. After all, shareholders can restructure the contents of the fund and wait for the time when it will turn a new one. This has been done before.

"The fund is owned by investors. The money is not AIG money... Shareholders can decide through a special meeting to appoint someone else. It is not a unique phenomenon," says Fernando Jose Sison III, chair of the Investment Company Association of the Philippines (ICAP).

Several persons familiar with the matter says Pearl has no exposure to subprime debt, the collapse of which has set off the financial turmoil that might affect investments.

"Those who are falling like a ton of bricks are the big boys because subprime debt is not something that just anybody can get into. The stock levels are very high that only big investment banks can get into them. Pearl's size and the 15-percent restriction of the SEC (Securities and Exchange Commission) shows that it has no exposure in Fannie Mae, Lehman or even AIG securities," says Gonzales.

5. In a bank run, the last man out usually gets lots or none. Not so with the situation of certain fund investments, pre-need and insurance. "This is when you call residual risk. It's an unfounded fear in these situations because it doesn't really matter if you are the first or the last in line for claims. All of you get the same amount because insurance will be divided among investors," explains Gonzales.

Acting on fear and panic, says experts, will only cause losses. If things work out eventually, and you have already surrendered your policy or your investments, it's possible to suffer from real losses.

6. Diversify your holdings among different asset classes and country baskets to manage risks. "The learning here really is to diversify your holdings. If you are in risky products, depending on your financial situation and session of income, you might want to rebalance your portfolio, let's say every six months to one year," says CISAP's Yu.

7. Bolster your emergency funds. Yu says higher personal and business reserves will provide every investor because of the cost of volatility. "We don't know what's going to happen with your riskier investments, so you need higher reserves. Even if you are employed, the regularity of your income will be dependent on the industry where you are employed," he says.

Philam has over 5,000 employees right now who are wondering what is going to happen to their company. There are times when emergency funds come in handy.

"Be patient with your existing investments and be safer with your new investments, taking in to account the context of your portfolio. Some people will say it is the time to buy now because it is cheap. And it is cheap. But do you have enough reserves? If you do, buy now and just be patient and wait. If the going gets worse before it gets better, do you have the capability to ride it out?" says Yu.

8. Choose carefully the financial institutions where you put money. Size appears to be a plus factor, but more importantly the values of the management that handles your money. Most of all, know what you are getting into. Ignorance is often the source of fear.

"Look for institutions and investments that are under regulation. That's insurance or something that is not regulated by the SEC or the BSP because if you do and something goes wrong, you won't have any protection. Beware of big companies pose greater systemic risk and as such are prone to protection by regulatory bodies," says Yu.

Fear and greed have always been the basis of financial markets since they were created. Johnny Sin Rando, managing director of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, says it is crucial to act only on verifiable information and not on rumors.

"When all of us panic, this generates the panic that we are trying to avoid in the first place. That's the certainty. Everything else is a choice," Rando says.

"In the end of the day, this still is a question of perspective, and everybody has a role in creating that perspective. The companies, for full and honest disclosure, the regulators to monitor and assess, the media in broadcasting the information and the individual investor in choosing what he must do," he adds.

It is in the individual savers and investors' interest to choose wisely. And not out of fear.

E-mail the writer at ligfer@philstar.com. For more personal finance articles, visit blog.philstar.com/ or http://blogs.inquirer.net/moneymatters

At 100, GM boasts portfolio of alternative propulsion vehicles

Text and photos by Charles E. Bolton

IT'S interesting to note that when General Motors was established 100 years ago, the world was an automobile.

The gas-powered vehicle was still to lose with carriages but had to deal with the dirt that horses that pull them could only work for so long and produce prodigious amounts of manure that had to be collected and disposed of.

The other option were the so-called horseless carriages, new contraptions that could move by themselves via a gasoline-powered internal-combustion engine.

But in that time, they were generally regarded as mere novelties and their development were seldom taken seriously.

Dominance

Their development did not winter and as technology improved, these horseless carriages—which were later called automobiles—gained dominance to their rivalry with horses.

The rest is history of events.

However, as GM celebrates its 100th anniversary this month, one can't help but think how the world is again entering in the same roads.

Yes, automobiles are still the dominant mode of transportation with GM having eight apparently top brands ranging from entry number Chevrolets to high-end Hummers.

But the turbulent times in the world of them have become one of the major causes of its pollution and climate change.

More importantly, the fact that powers them is becoming too expensive and scarce.

2010

Instead of recalling the glory days when GM maintained its world leadership in every auto and market share throughout the '80s to '90s, the company's executives are looking expectantly ahead to November 2010.

This is the time when GM expects to bring the Chevy Volt to market.

"At GM (effective) in (2008) you, the company would rather focus on the technological and business premise of GM's next century than its storied history. In fact, we are creating ourselves up for the next 100 years in some very important ways," president GM Southeast Asia Operations president Stephen Carlisle, who recently led GM's communications drive in the country.

Icing

While GM is developing entirely new technology solutions to displace gasoline such as fuel cell vehicles, the Chevrolet Volt is expected to be the icing to GM's 100th birthday celebration.

The Chevy Volt is a compact five-door sedan with front-wheel drive and four passenger seating.

It is classified as an extended-range electric vehicle, which differs markedly from the Prius of Toyota and other gasoline-electric hybrids that use a battery and electric motor as an adjunct to an internal combustion engine.

Instead, the Chevy Volt's 1.4-liter gasoline engine serves as an electricity generator and battery charger and is not connected to the drive wheels.

Lithium-ion batteries

The Chevy Volt will be one of the first retail-market vehicles to use state-of-the-art lithium-ion batteries instead of the older and more common nickel-metal hydride type.

It will power Chevy Volt's 150 horsepower all-electric motor that will be the car's only means to move it at all times.

GM's Chevy Equinox Fuel Cell is an electric SUV powered by the company's fourth-generation fuel cell system

This means is capable of moving the car from zero to 60 in 8.5 seconds and attaining a top speed of at least 160 kph.

GM says during that with a fully charged battery, the car could run for more than 80 km and with the gasoline engine continuously charging the battery pack, the Chevy Volt could attain an overall driving range of 640 km without refilling the 45-liter gasoline tank.

The Chevy Volt can also be plugged into a standard household 240-volt outlet and be ready in less than three hours.

Game changer

It's clear that GM views the Chevy Volt as a potential game-changer for the entire auto industry.

In his statement during the Chevy Volt's recent unveiling, GM chair and CEO Rick Wagoner said the car is symbolic of the company's strong commitment to the future adding that the car is just the kind of technology innovation that the industry needs to respond to today's and tomorrow's energy and environmental challenges.

However, if the Chevy Volt succeeds, the car could put GM on a whole new path after a century of depending on internal-combustion engine.

Improve

But while pinning its hope on the electric car, GM is also investing in improving current technologies.

For example, the company is investing $445 million in Thailand to build a clean diesel engine plant and upgrade an existing vehicle assembly plant.

The investment also includes engineering development work and retooling of the Bang Chan assembly plant for production of the next generation of its small diesel-powered pickup truck, the Chevy Colorado, which is sold in Thailand and exported around the world (but not available in the Philippines).

"Diesel engines are a very important part of GM's global product portfolio. In fact, for 2009 GM offers 16 engine variants available in 41 vehicle lines around the world and sells more one million diesel engines annually," is Howard's outlook.

It should be noted that in 2008, GM Chevrolet Thailand became Thailand's first and only automaker to offer passengers cars equipped with a bi-fuel system that is able to use either gasoline or CNG—unlike the engine automatically switching to gasoline fuel source when CNG has been fully consumed.

This year, GM launched its first DMC-powered models by introducing to Thailand, the kingdom's first pickup truck—the Colorado—that could simultaneously run CNG (80 percent) and diesel (20 percent), or be switched to consume 100 percent diesel.

"Our strategy at GM remains clear: it is no single technology solution to immediate challenges particular, the company is exploring a variety of technology strategies that could lessen our dependency on petroleum, reduce carbon dioxide emissions as well as boost fuel efficiency," said Carlisle.

PRE-PRODUCTION Chevy Volt (photo courtesy of GM)

GM chair and CEO Wagoner (right) joins actor Cochise Jon Arkenberg in the car giant's commitment to the future

FEATURES IN BRIEFS

Holcim sets benchmark in sustainability

FOR THE FOURTH YEAR IN SUCCESSION, HOLCIM HAS BEEN named "Leader of the Industry" in the Dow Jones Sustainability Index (DJSI) and once again acknowledged as the company with the best sustainability performance in the building materials industry. The group has been included in both the Dow Jones Sustainability World Index and the Dow Jones STOXX Sustainability Index for six years.

The recognition rewards the continued and further-strengthened commitment to sustainable development as an important part of the group's strategy. The group's recycling strategy, its dialogue with stakeholders as well as its efforts in human resources development received top scores.

Holcim Philippines Inc. strives to make a mark on the sustainability pavilion. Through its performance and participation, the company makes sure it is firmly in the driver's seat of sustainable construction, steering the industry toward a cleaner environment. It is committed to continuously improve its environmental performance and promote innovative contributions to the business.

Holcim is one of the world's leading suppliers of cement and aggregates (crushed stone, gravel and sand) as well as downstream activities such as ready-mix concrete and asphalt.

Author to keynote CEM confab

DR. EDR. L. HOLCOMB IS SLATED TO BE THE KEYNOTE SPEAKER in a national conference organized by the Center of Educational Management Inc. (CEM). This is one of the highlights of its 30th anniversary celebration on Oct. 15 to 17 at the Edsa Shangri-La Hotel. The four-books-fulcrum has authored on school improvement, leadership, and reform have been helping schools and districts increase student achievement, develop professional learning cultures and processes, enhance student engagement, and design and conduct program evaluation, through the appropriate use of refined data in such countries as the United States, Canada, Qatar, Hong Kong and the Philippines. She is also the executive director of Curriculum and Instructional Services in the 23,000-student district of Kenosha, Wisconsin. Aside from giving the keynote speech on the morning of Oct. 16, Holcomb will be conducting one-day workshops with teachers and administrators on the topic "Strengthening Our Use of Data and School Improvement Plans."

From the initial college entrance test, CEM now offers a wide range of tools for achievement/diagnostic, admissions, and career guidance purposes.

Big firms unite for Senyahon 2008

THIRTY TWO TEAMS FROM MARKOSYAN/PHILIPPINE EDISYON-Runs are pooling their employee volunteers to join Manila Ou Manila's (HOM) Senyahon 2008, the yearly six-mile marathon, where companies simultaneously participate in community projects that yield very tangible results.

These teams come from Accenture, Amrop, Ateneo Law Batch '86, BAM Global Services Manila, Bank of the Philippine Islands Foundation, Central Azucarera Don Pedro Inc., Cibo, Coca-Cola Foundation Philippines Inc., Eon The Stakeholder Relations firm, Chevron Philippines, Far Eastern University, First Gen Corp., Globe Telecom, Hong Kong Shanghai Banking Corp. Ltd. (HSBC), ING Bank, Krispy Kreme, Max's, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Planters Bank, PCBC Savings Bank, Richmix Mobiletics, Synergeo and Ble | on Angeles, Rockwell Land, Shakey's, Stagecraft, and Thomson Reuters.

Senyahon 2008 will be held on Oct. 11, 2008 with projects all over Metro Manila. These include revitalizing public schools, gardening and landscaping, construction and renovation of homes, and mural painting, among others.

Swiss water firm taps thirst for purity

From page B1-1

QUIBA CEO Gabriela Manser poses next to bottled "Himmi, Maaster and Wonder" drinks at the Cuba production line

BLOOMBERG

in the United States...which accounts for about 75 percent of annual revenues—is slowing.

"It reflects in a certain degree the contraction in the banking sector," said Kate Brandshaug, chief executive of Voss. "We still see growth, but it is slower in this segment."

Mario Galpoz, an analyst at ING, says bottled water firms are moving away from middle-of-the-road products, placing the emphasis on premium or value brands.

"If you can highlight the uncommon of the water and highlight the quality benefits I think you can still charge a premium," he said. "But that will also be impacted, because in an economic recession people will cut out less. An economic recession would definitely have an impact."

Premium purity

Beleta consultancy Euromonitor International said in a report this month that global consumption of bottled water increased by 6 percent last year to 206 billion liters.

Analysts say premium bottled waters are benefiting from a growing demand for purity and exclusivity in a world becoming increasingly aware of environmental and health issues.

"There's a trend to see the rise," said Richard Pelz, managing director Hamburg at Interbrand.

"Production conditions, transport routes and packaging are up for discussion and are openly communicated," he said. "Low-cost origin is an excellent way to transport values such as quality, credibility or pure nature." Michael Straeda, author of the book "Fine Waters" and founder of the website www.finewaters.com, says smaller companies have stepped in to fill the demand for gourmet, pure products. "Big companies overlooked that trend and opened up a space for smaller companies."

Straeda said origin and purity are now prized differentiators in the water market—a trend also seen with products like olive oil and vodka where provenance is increasingly important.

Twelve one-liter bottles of Appenzell cost around $11.70, more expensive than other Swiss brands but well below prices for Dansvo's Erbai, Sweden's Vittel and Geneva, and Icon.

The Norwegian firm makes about $1 million a month by selling to hotels like the Four Seasons and the Ritz-Carlton, among others.

Twelve one-liter bottles of Voss water go for $28.80, according to online water store www.aquariusstore.com the Norwegian firm has enjoyed average annual sales growth of 40 percent since it started seven years ago.

"It's a luxury product in a market which didn't have that segment before," said Voss CEO Brandsland.

Some producers have taken that luxury image to the limit—Fiji's $220 spring water from Tennessee, sells for $440 for 12 0.75-liter bottles which are decorated with hexagonal crystals.

New markets

Desiring a launch bash at the Quiapo building prism, the sizzlers have fallen silent and it sweet and sour notes of roses and ginger lingers in the air.

Cuba did not have any money for advertising so she got advice from local experts in terms for issues of mineral waters.

"Today, we pay them fees," she added quickly.

Cuba began introducing flavored water drinks, five flavors—local dialect for buterfly—and then Himmi and Wonder. And Maaster entered playing a bottle of Maaster on top of every case of mineral water sold...boosting sales. Reuters

Marketing RX

From page B1-1

In this case, it's obvious that the Del Monte consumer found that her brand has a highly positive differentiation (reserve vis-a-vis its nearest competitor's Dimes). That's the thickness of Del Monte's tomato content. This is the first requirement for price setting: your brand's perceptions vis-a-vis closest competitor. We must confirm that your consumers appreciate from their experiencing of your improved product its product differentiation, i.e., the higher quality that your R&D created in it.

Three considerations

In addition to the preceding, here are three other considerations you must take to arrive at your brand's correct product-differentiation-based competitive pricing:

1. In price positioning vacuum, start by NOT identifying the brands of the competing products you're testing. That's what is meant by a "blind" product test. You have to do this so that you don't influence the choice of your consumers.

2. When you ask consumers about the worth and value to them of the chosen product's differentiating make it easy for them to answer in at least two ways. First is by referring them to the current price of the product WITHOUT the improved quality and to the competing brand that's also short of the added value. Second is by letting them choose from a list (thousand) of "values" as percent more of the current price and/or the equivalent price of each percent value.

3. Notice that in the list of percent or pure "added values," each item is shown as a range: 1-3 percent more versus no price; 4-6 percent more; 7-9 percent more .... That's to capture how consumers think about price as shown in our price surveys. When asked about the price of what they bought just 10 or 15 minutes ago, they speak of a price range like "sigi between P7 or P8." To get at the specific price point, notice that the researcher had to build up toward it by doing the appropriate probing which is: "But 8ito, if you were to pick from the two. What will you really say? Twelve percent more or 15 percent more?"

For the case that your brand represents, we've also been often asked: "What if the product we made were reversed?" In other words, what if it's Delta Bandung that your Del Monte consumers claim in the Mind test as superior over Del Monte and on the same quality differentiation? What then would be your product-differentiation-based competitive pricing for Del Monte Bandung?

Let's face it, you have to find out how your executive pride or ardor will RAG to do so. But that should be after showing them how flawed their assumptions are about the consumers. Secondly, your product-differentiation-based pricing must be based on the opposite direction that it took when it was your brand that your consumers saw as superior over theirs.

When your brand was seen as possessing the differentiator, you priced it as 15 percent more than theirs. In this reversed product test results, you have to price 15 percent less to be competitive. Of course, before doing this, you might want to go back to R&D and get them to correct the deficiencies. When they have, you can redo your product testing and proceed as before in arriving at a new product-differentiation-based-competitive pricing.

Keep your questions coming—post them on www.marketingrx.ph or e-mail Marketingrx@pldt.net.ph. Art. Del Mont

B7 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2008

BUSINESS Friday

Megaworld project's central location benefits families on the go

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MEGAWORLD

For inquiries: 926-0002

'Does competitive pricing apply in the case of a superior product?'

Competitive pricing does not refer to only matching the competitors' prices

Q: WE'RE IN THE FOOD PREPARATION and cooked food aid category where in most cases, brands are very close to one another in price and quality. There, we practice competitive pricing in the sense that we price at competition does. But for those products that our R&D people say are superior over competition, we price them above their competitors. Sometimes, we've succeeded getting shoppers to accept our higher price but have failed in some cases.

R&D had recently improved a major product and we want to relaunch it but at a much higher price than before and even as its competitor's brand. Current pricing of our brand and its closest competitor is the same. With the product improvement, R&D has recommended pricing at 20-30 percent more than competitions. This time, as chair of the pricing committee, I want to make sure we don't get a balking mark from our consumers.

How can we disuade if R&D is right about its higher price recommendations? How can we better anticipate our consumers' response to our improved brand's pricing at 20-30 percent more?

A: Your case is typical of a market where the competing brands are continually having product differentiation. So before this commoditization trend continues toward its disastrous end, you are right in stopping it by product improvements, among other means. That is product-differentiation-based competitive pricing. It's still an issue of competitive pricing. In other words, competitive pricing does not refer to only matching the competitors' prices.

Ask your consumers

So how do you price the improved product so that it's within your consumers' own valuation of the product (different folks don't value grapes at 70 a simple and obvious answer is: "Ask your consumers."

Sure R&D people will probably tell you that they know your consumers and how, therefore, considered their reactions. After all, the product improvement they made was most likely sourced from consumer feedbacks.

In those occasions where you said your higher price versus competition "succeeded," R&D was correct in their prediction of consumer response. But in those many more "failure" cases for a higher price, R&D was wrong. So R&D's track record is a "tie" wrong. And that's basically your worry. What if R&D's recommended 20-30 percent higher price for your improved product falls under the "failure" set?

So why not ask your consumers? The trouble, of course, is there's a right and wrong way of asking consumers. The wrong way of asking is to throw a direct question like: "How much more will you pay for this improved quality?"

Consumers don't know

Consumers don't know. First of all, in most cases consumers don't have the technical qualification and, therefore, the calculus for assessing the worth of the improved quality especially when you just tell them about it. So how do they assess on their own or tell you about a product's added value?

They assess through experience. They have to experience the added value or value in your product's improved quality before asking; you have to give them that experience. You can do this by product testing with your consumers your improved product. This step is particularly critical with new product mixes.

After the value-giving experiencing of your improved (another term for the product test, then you can ask consumers about the worth of your improved quality for them. But as we've cautioned, ask not directly.

A clarifying specific example should help explain. Here's a case of a product test of two tomato catsup brands, Del Monte and Heinz. The subjects are Del Monte Tomato Ketchup regular consumers who were asked about two catsup brands they tried during a preceding "blind" product test where Del Monte was coded XF246 and Heinz, XF135. Here's how one typical interview of a regular consumers of Del Monte Ketchup went along:

Researcher: "Mrs., which one of these two did you like more?"

Consumer: "A, ... ito." [This one.] [Pointing to XF246 = Del Monte]

Researcher: "Sa ano-anong mga qualities ang nalagong mas nagustuhan ninyo dyan (Del Monte) kaysa dito (Heinz)?" (In what qualities did you really like with this versus that?)

Consumer: "Mas ano siya. Alam na malapot siya. Think nalagay yung tomatong dinuon siya. Hindi diquid." [It's much thicker. The tomato-content. They didn't scrimp on it.]

Researcher: "Ano pa iba?" [What else Mrs.?]

Consumer: "Sus ding talaga. Kasi para sakin parehu na dating dalawa sa lasing lasgas." [There's still reality. For me, the two are really the same on taste qualities.]

Researcher: "Mrs., itong (XF246) nagustuhan mo e Del Monte. Yung isa (XF135) dinu. Ilano sila (price shown)? yung price nila. Ilembo lang. Sa Mrs, yung pagkamahalagang catsup, gano kahalaga yan sa inyo--compare sa kanyang price? One-3 percent more nung price; 4-6 percent more; 7-9 percent more; ... Sige Mrs, gabi ka'o dito (using percent shown)?" [Mrs., this one that you like in Del Monte. The other one is Heinz. And then, here are their prices. The same. So Mrs., the thickness of Del Monte Ketchup, how much more is that worth to you versus its price? One-3 percent more versus its price? Four-6 percent more; 7 percent more; ... So--Mrs? Mrs. (picture point here (using the percent shown)).]

Consumer: "Maghalaw ai pesin yung mga percentages na yan?" [How much in price are those percentages?]

Researcher: "A, eto Mrs. (another show-card). Buti na lang nandito ito sila sa." [Here Mrs. (another show-card). It was good I brought along these figures.]

Consumer: "Ki ago. Parang eto ayos. ... mga 11 percent to 15 percent more." [Well, looks like here, ... about 11 percent to 15 percent more.]

Researcher: "Sure kung gipili kaya dito at dalawa. Ano talaga ang ringkr niya? Twelve percent more o 15 percent more?" [But if you were to pick from the two. What will you really say? Twelve percent more or 15 percent more?]

Consumer: "Manga current talaga ako sa lapot siya. Fifteen percent." [Well, I'm really impressed with the thickness. So 15 percent more.]

BUSINESS Friday

Souvenirs king goes into island-hopping

Hopes to professionalize the sector

By Irene R. Jose Cruz
Inquirer Visayas

CEBU CITY—KNOWN FOR trailblazing ventures, Cebu businessman Jay Aldegaer has once again ventured into the island-hopping business that has so far been served by small boat operators.

Recognizing the potential in the island-hopping market, Aldegaer, Islands Group president, says they set up Islands Ferries (Cebu) (IFC), which has been operational for four months.

"Cebu has been a world-class destination but what the tourists and visitors are clamoring for are world-class activities, such as experiences that can compare to whale shark experience in Oslob, the tarsier or chocolate hills experience in Bohol, the white water rafting in Cagayan de Oro and Davao," he explains.

The company invested P2 million for the boats and the cost of setting up the business, he reveals.

"I'm pretty excited because I did not expect this business has this much potential," Aldegaer says.

Business potential

Aldegaer says they have realized the potential of the business when he learned the Mactan Channel has between 50 to 80 boats daily serving tourists who go island-hopping even on weekdays.

These were owned by fishermen and boat operators who have up to five boats each, he says.

Aldegaer notes that Cebu still has to maximize its island-hopping activities.

"We are trying to streamline it and introduce the activities and I really think that Cebu is a destination has not pushed island-hopping strongly enough as during," he says.

Just like when he started his souvenirs business, Island Souvenirs, Aldegaer says people also ask him why he ventured into a business that appears to be a micro business.

But he believes that just like Islands Souvenirs that transformed the country's souvenirs business from a cottage industry into a flourishing one, the IFC will play a role in bringing professionalism to the island-hopping business.

Various activities

The IFC offers different activities, such as snorkeling, sea kayaking, fish feeding and dolphin watching. It also offers special packages, such as sunset cruises, dinner and barbecue picnics on board the banca or on a sandbar, theme parties or a combo of dinner for two.

The IFC's boats also have facilities out of their ordinary others also offering island-hopping activities.

"Our boats are newly designed. It has a sun deck, an iPod dock and Wi-Fi facilities for our bigger boats. Our headings are also becoming popular. Everybody likes to lounge around (the boat deck)," he says.

The IFC now has three boats but it has one others under construction.

"We will have five boats before the end of the year. And, in preparation for the new seasons, we hope to double our capacity," he tells the reporter.

Of the three boats, the Bucanding is the biggest and could carry between 30 persons to 35 persons.

The Bucide has a capacity of 15 persons to 20 persons, while Bolinao could carry as persons to eight persons.

Aldegaer says the two boats under construction have bigger capacities and could accommodate more than 25 people.

"It looks like the market revolves around that capacity. We're getting a lot of private parties, even children's parties and company-outings," he points out.

The IFC also has tie-ups with Japanese and other foreign tour operators, he adds.

However, it appears like even this early, the IFC has positive impact on the sector as it is negotiating with at least three boat operators, who own at least five boats each, for the company to manage their boats.

"They recognize our link in the travel industry. They would rather have us manage the boats. As early as the first few months of operations, we were already outsourcing some of our services," he explains.

Aldegaer says the IFC is willing to take over the operation of those boats but those have to meet the standards of the company.

"The boats will be branded by us and the

SOUVENIRS B3

People, Events & Products

E-mail: pep@inquirer.com.ph
Editor: Arlen Espinosa

Globaltronics, PBSP join forces for digital advocacy competition

DIGITAL BILLBOARD PROVERB: Globaltronics recently signed a Memorandum of Agreement with the Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP) to launch Sun.rise "2008 IEC Advocacy Advertising in the Digital Age" competition or billboard.com.

The first of its kind in the Philippines, Advocacy will challenge companies to create the most original and impactful "social ad clips". There it is 8-second videos will follow a corporate social responsibility theme and will be aired over Globe-owned digital billboards in Metro Manila.

Prior to the competition, Global-tronics will also host a seminar that will teach the science behind electronic billboard advertising. The pre-competition workshop will also guide companies on the content and design nuances specific to the digital billboard medium.

Advocacy will be open to any legitimate and registered member company of PBSP.

Signing the Memorandum of Agreement were Gil Salinas, executive director, PBSP; Mel Murcia Rivera, chair for membership and external relations committee, PBSP; Val Mercer, general manager, Globaltronics; and Glenn Enriquez, corporate communications manager, Globe Group of Companies.

Globaltronics is the exclusive Philippine distributor of Elektron, makers of world-class electronic billboards. Philippine Business for Social Progress is composed of 239 companies and is the largest business-led social development foundation in the Philippines.

SMDC TOASTS SEA AND FIELD RESIDENCES

SM Development Corp (SMDC) recently unveiled last of its nine-strong Pasay projects, the Sea Residences at the Mall of Asia Complex and Field Residences in Taguig, Pinanguian Hosting the event dubbed "Sagpuri Residences" for SMDC's customers partnership were Henry Sy Jr. (SMDC vice chair; Angelin Calimag, SMDC president and chief executive officer; Elizabeth Sy, SMDC senior vice president for marketing; Dan Sy, vice president for sales; and their sister Teresa, assistant vice president marketing. Shown are (from left) first Miss Manners Bernadette Ramos (MVP sales); Henry Sy, Jr.; Elizabeth Sy; Angelin Calimag; and Dr. Ian Sy (VP sales).

WILL DEVAUGHN FOR BARCELONA BRANDY

Top commercial model and Pinoy Big Brother Celebrity Edition Season 2 fourth placer Will Devaughn has been chosen as the new endorser of Barcelona Brandy. According to Barcelona Brandy's marketing team, Will is the perfect and timeless of "old, sweet" style that perfectly epitomizes what the brand is all about. Shown during the contract signing are (from left) Paolo Tarlo from the creative agency; Gary Li - VP for advertising and marketing, Tanduay Distillers Inc.; Will Devaughn; Andrea Ilo - VP for sales and marketing, Tanduay Distillers Inc.; Paula Punla - talent manager for Will Devaughn and Eng Bueno from the creative agency.

Cisco's products and solutions help companies become IPv6 compliant

TO SUPPORT THE ADOPTION AND DEPLOYMENT of Internet Protocol version 6 (IPv6), Cisco has developed a wide range of products and solutions to help organizations in the Philippines prepare and manage their transition to IPv6.

Cisco says a platform question at the moment is: Is Cisco's products and solutions help companies become IPv6 compliant? The integration of IPv6 includes hardware such as routing and human resources associated with the project and variable costs dependent on the network devices and applications that require IPv6 support.

IP is the basis of today's Internet. It is a method by which data is transferred from one host to another. For almost twenty years, the Internet has been IPv4 which has been successfully resilient in spite of its age, but is now showing signs of tension especially in its growing shortage of address space.

An improved IP version is needed to satisfy the potential huge increase in the number of users and as the geographical needs of the Internet expands with emerging applications such as Internet-based wireless devices, home and industrial appliances, Internet-connected transportations, integrated telephony services and distributed computing or gaming.

IPv6 is the answer to enabling an improved global Internet architecture with enough unique IP addresses for future growth. IPv6 fixes a number of problems in IPv4 such as larger address space, flexible header format, improved options, support for resource allocation and provision for protocol extension.

While both IPv4 and IPv6 will coexist for some time to come, widespread transition to IPv6 is expected to occur between 2010 and 2015. Although companies have already begun, the movement to IPv6 depends on a number of factors, including the geographical region and market segment.

Full adoption by commercial and consumer networks also depends on IT IPv6 capable applications. In the Asia-Pacific region IP addresses are projected to be in short supply after the Philippines, only 7 of 70 registered Internet Service Providers (ISPs) are currently accessing the IPv6.

For more information on IPv6, visit http://www.cisco.com/ipv6.

AQUAHEALTH CONTRACT SIGNING

Photo shows the contract signing of Aquahealth's exclusive franchisee of the main office last June 17. Shown are (standing from left): Ted Uriel S. Agustin (chair), Catherine S. Jacob, lawyer Aldrin Peñaflor; (seated from left): Ace Agustin (president) and Rita Ayo Jacob.

Glaucoma: Delay in detection may lead to irreversible blindness

GLAUCOMA IS ONE OF THE LEADING causes of blindness in the world. It is estimated that more than 90 million people worldwide are affected by glaucoma. In the Philippines, the June National Survey on Blindness undertaken by the Department of Health and the University of the Philippines cited glaucoma as the 3rd leading cause of blindness following cataract and error of refraction.

According to Dr. Norman Aquino, a **glaucoma specialist at the Asiaeye** Eye Center and current president of **the Philippine Glaucoma Society**, "It is important to raise public awareness regarding glaucoma and the irreversible blindness that can ensue as a result of a delay in the detection of the disease, appropriate diagnosis and therapeutic treatment". Dr. Aquino stressed that "discovering the disease early in its course and initiating the right treatment is the best way of preserving vision and preventing blindness in patients".

Glaucoma can present itself in a variety of ways often depending on the type of glaucoma present. Some types manifest with symptoms such as eye pain and redness, blurred vision, headaches, and seeing halos around bright lights. Both types of glaucoma, and sometimes, lead a patient to see, call an ophthalmologist. However, there are other types that have no signs nor symptoms, specially in the early stages. These are the ones that are often discovered late in the course of the disease, would need more aggressive treatment and have a greater probability of developing visual disability or loss.

Thus, a comprehensive eye exam is highly recommended for those 40 years of age and above, especially if one has existing "risk factors" for the development of the disease. These "risk factors" include, among many others, having other family members diagnosed to have glaucoma; history of trauma to the eyes; history of unexplained eye surgery; high errors of refraction; severe eye infection and inflammation; diabetes; Chinese ancestry; and, prolonged use of steroid medications.

In the Philippines today, it's fortunate that sophisticated technology for the early detection and confirmation of glaucoma is available. State-of-the-art machines like the Heidelberg retina tomograph (HRT), automated visual field analyzers, colored digital optic disc camera, corneal specular microscope, pachymeter and anterior segment analyzer like the Pentacam, and the non-penetration tonometers assist and complement the ophthalmologist in evaluating each patient's eye condition.

The treatment and aggressiveness of therapy will largely depend on the type and severity of the glaucomatous disease present in a patient. "Treatment, in the form of drops, laser, or surgery should be specific and tailored for each individual patient," said Dr. Aquino. He added that seeking a "second opinion" especially when surgery or laser therapy is being contemplated, is perfectly acceptable to do.

For more information on glaucoma, visit the American Eye Center at the 5th Level of the Shangri-La Plaza Mall or call 6328888 (EYES) and 893-7-LASER (893-7-5237).

POLYURETHANE PANEL FORMING PLANT INAUGURATED

Another milestone in the history of the Philippine Polyurethane Group was reached when Eduardo Saliente Group (EGG), the group's pre-painted steel roofing subsidiary, inaugurated its Polyurethane (PU) Panel Forming Plant located in Pulung, Clarau City last Aug. 30. Photo shows (from left) Secretary Salvador H. Mercado of the Department of Agriculture and Primrose Industrial Estate Inc. Chairman Wilfredo E. Ng at the ribbon-cutting ceremony. With Mercado and Ng are Governor Eduardo V. Saliente, president of Eduardo Saliente Group (EGG); Agripina Panzares, VP-marketing of Primrose Galvanized Corp; Arthur M. Flowers, president of Primrose Galvanized Corp; Hayward Flowers from Cameron Tan Land Plc Ltd; BASF Chemical Corp. Executive Vice President Jaime Sy; and Primrose Galvanized Corp. Executive Vice President Jaime Sy.

Lt. Governor Eduardo Saliente and his company's clients and customers who attended the inauguration of the company's Mindanao regional office.

Product Files

Sunnex' new pretty pastel pans and chic designer bottoms

IS ANNEX THE MOST TRUSTED BRAND IN Filipino cookware kitchens? Is Daffodil collection a three, thin and atmospheric cookware set that brings with colorful moments when cooking a meal for your loved ones. With colors in very light colorful green, peach and brown, these new kitchen delights calms and adds a charming touch to every kitchen store. The three-piece collection includes a saucepan, fry pan, and a casserole with glass lid to keep an eye on the cooking. Coated with Dupont Teflon technology, the non-stick surface allows even heating and cooking with little oil to make food foods glide with no difficulty. An easy clean enamel exterior makes clean-up trouble-free to after-cooking hands scrubbing and scratching. Tapered and easy to grip, the silicone handles are comfortable to handle, as well as cool and soft to the touch. With the Sunnex Daffodil collection, enjoy the light and calming shades that pastel has to offer. Available in all SM, Robinsons, and other department stores.

Bits Clips

Sydenham Beverages promotes health

SYDENHAM LABORATORIES INC. A MANUFACTURER OF vital medicines and vitamins is now also known as the makers of healthy juices under the Joulicious brand. These juices are Joulicious Plus and Pink which most people now know as lower ages that promote the health and well-being of kids and adults. The Joulicious beverages are a quick study and formulations. It took years of research and experimentation before it was approved by nutrition experts led by Dr. Florentino, chair and president of the Nutrition Foundation of the Philippines. The group specifically studied and formulated Joulicious Plus so it can benefit Filipino children for ages 2-14 years. This juice has CDP and Taurine which play important roles in the physical growth and cognitive development of children. CDP or Citicoline Sodium Factor makes children grow better and bigger while Taurine is an amino acid that helps in the development of the brain and nervous system. These two nutrients were put together to make up this brand perfect combination which spurs growth in physical and mental development of children. Having succeeded in the youth market, Sydenham went one to formulate a health juice for adults known as Peak. Like Joulicious Plus, Peak is also packed with vitamins and minerals. The combination of which also accelerated sports recovery and experimentation before it was introduced to the market. It has L-Carnitine to relieve stress, Taurine for immune enhancement, Vitamins B-complex, C, E and the B-complex. Calcium and Zinc for optimum energy to sustain an active lifestyle. Young adults from stressful offices have taken to drinking Peak to relieve stress, keep alert and increase them to engage in social activities after work. Peak is fast becoming the choice of the mobile-network connected professionals.

Sun Cellular offers affordable packages

HERE SUN MATTERS BROCHURE

news for everyone - the combination of call and text services in one pocket-friendly must for all prepaid Sun subscribers - The Sun Call and Text Combo. With this new offer, subscribers can enjoy longer call privileges, unlimited text messages and free downloads and friends even from other networks, without the competitive network charges. This starter gives you two load variants to choose from: the P25 Call and Text Combo and P15 Call and Text Combo. Sun's P15 Call and Text Combo gives you 10 minutes of Sun-to-Sun calls, 400 Sun-to-Sun texts and 10 texts to other networks—all for only P15. While is not enough and you must know how to call and send more text messages, opt for the P20 Call and Text Combo. Packed with 20 minutes of Sun-to-Sun calls, 80 Sun-to-Sun texts and 20 other-network texts, this provided is definitely a steal for only P20. For those of you who have just found of these exciting promos from Sun Cellular and want to avail of any but you still have your regular load, no need to worry. You can convert your regular load to either of Call and Text Combo variants. It's so easy. Just text CTC(space)yes to 2200 for P10 Call and Text Combo, or CTC(space)no Sun to 2200 for P20 Call and Text Combo. Both texts are valid for one day and are also available via Sun Express Load. For more details about Sun products, visit the nearest The Sun Shop store or any Sun Cellular Kiosk/cart retail outlet. Customers may also call the hotline 300-8200 from your landline or 200 from your mobile phone. You may also log onto www.sunvalue.com.ph for other information.

Qatar Airways reinforces top ten status

RESULTS FROM THE LATEST SKYTRAX WORLD AIRLINE Awards have positioned Qatar Airways as the best airline in the Middle East for the third consecutive year. Heading off strong competition in a region experiencing massive growth in its aviation sector, Qatar Airways' talent once was named Best in the Middle East for the sixth straight year, further cementing Qatar Airways' reputation as a five-Star carrier. Following this year's survey of 15 million international travelers, Qatar Airways also received recognition for its catering in the airline's premium cabins, with both First and Business Class cabins featuring in the top five lists of award recipients. The airline's exclusive Premium Terminal was also high on the lists of First and Business Class lounges, having been recognized as among the best in the world. This year's results continue to recognize the airline's ambitious efforts to provide passengers with the best onboard service in the global aviation industry.

FCA brand launched by First Class Agriculture Corp

FIRST CLASS AGRICULTURE CORP RECENTLY LAUNCHED FCA brand of veggies that have for some time been dotting the shelves of supermarket SM Supermarkets and Hypermarts, and also, those of bakery, "FCA" as a brand stands for Fresh Choice Always and is a declaration of guarantee which FCA stands to make good of. FCA is 100 percent owned subsidiary of Agribusiness Inc (ABC), a diversified agro-industrial conglomerate listed by list at the Philippine Stock Exchange.This year stands more than a decade of business acumen and expertise in agro-commercial business since 1997. ABC has recently landed a specialty retail for the medical FCA's processing, packaging and distribution facilities in Pulilan, Bulacan to introduce the "fresh Choice Always" veggies brand in order to affirm the company's commitment to the safety and freshness of all vegetables that it carries.

PAGASA delegates in session

Forum to help modernize Philippine printing industry

PRINTING IS AN IMPORTant industry in the country's economy. But obstacles ranging from high cost, and lack of skills and technology hinder the industry from realizing its full potentials.

Filipino printers can get a taste of the latest printing know-how in the 20th Forum of Asian Pacific Graphic Arts Technology (Pagat) to be held at the Sofitel Philippine Plaza Manila on Sept. 29-30.

Hosted by the Philippine Printing Technical Foundation (PPTF), the three-day international event hosts the theme, "The Printing and Graphic Arts Industry in the Globalization Era." The nine-country forum will discuss topics on standardization, trends in digital printing, inks and dual properties in the Asia Pacific region.

"Pagat provides a forum where Asian printers can complement each other through shared technologies and expertise in a globally competitive market," says Benito Briñola, president of the 600-member PPTF.

The group is composed of Japan, China, Korea, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Australia, Sri Lanka and the Philippines.

Briñola, who also heads Book Media Press Inc. and Media Media Inc., pointed out that the Philippines is the only Pagat member which needs to add more printing schools to keep up with its Asian neighbors in printing technology.

"With new insights on technologies to be acquired from the forum, we hope the Philippines can move forward state-of-the-art equipment, including printing schools and offer degree courses on print engineering," he enthused.

He said that at present, the country can only offer a certificate course printing program because the PPTF and the Technological University of the Philippines, while all the other Pagat members have at least six printing schools.

The European Union, Briñola revealed, is willing to donate modern machines and provide training should the printing schools materialize. The EU considers the country as a very promising market.

The local printing industry is expected to grow next year because of the growth of allied industries like advertising, tourism, the hospitality business, service sectors and the general elections in 2010.

Briñola said PPTF has scored an initial victory when the Board of Investments granted a five-year tax holiday for investors and tax incentives for importers in the printing industry when industry leaders were President Macapagal Arroyo for government incentives.

What's in, what's out in franchising

By Chapsie Medina
Inquirer.net

THE PHENOMENAL GROWTH of the multibillion-peso franchising industry in the Philippines could not have been possible without the guiding rule of franchise consultants.

These consulting firms continue to flourish on the crest of cloning modest-sized Filipino businesses into successful multiple-outlet franchised operations. In the process, they have also helped ease the strategy of expansion pains of both franchisor and franchisee.

For BE Franchise Consultancy, the exercise of franchising in the Philippines comes hand in hand with a rising awareness among Filipinos to go into business.

Owned and managed by Rudolf Kerik and Margarita Rocio, BE Franchise has to date grabbed more than 300 companies in feeding the need in franchising. Their clients include food carts or cafe corner operations.

Beginnings

Before coming to the country in 1998, Rudolf, an Austrian, had worked for European franchise divisions of several companies including McDonald's and a hotel chain. He made his first home in Cebu, where he brought in foreign brands for local businessmen interested in franchising.

During the Asian contagion in 1997, as the peso weakened, the cost of foreign-branded franchises became prohibitive. This was when the idea of focusing more on franchising local brands developed.

In 1999, Rudolf set up BE Franchise after coaching several of the island-based businesses in developing their own franchising manuals and operating systems. Four years after, Rudolf moved his office to Manila. By this time, he had already helped set up 20 franchise systems.

Food businesses dominate BE Franchise's client list, and account for about two-thirds of the total. The food-serving businesses, in particular, has been appealing among warm-to-be franchisors.

"The food is good, healthy and cheap. The packaging is attractive," Rudolf says. This describes why there is a continued patronage and popularity among Filipinos of snacks sold in cans. The potential franchisees, though, the local and business-inquiries lower investment, reasonably acceptable returns and ease of mobilization.

Emerging franchisors

- Jewelry stores
- Business processing centers
- Gasoline stations
- Hotels
- Services
- Pawnshops
- Drugstores

One of BE Franchise's success stories is Bayo-Chiro's Takoyaki, a food cart outlet selling Japanese snacks. For several years, owner Regine Bagayong had been quite happy with operating and operating seven carts in strategic malls in Gateway and Greenhills.

When Regine decided to franchise Takoyaki in 2005, he called Rudolf. It took Regine about a year to develop the Takoyaki franchise system. When BE formally rolled out Takoyaki, it took them less than a year to expand the food cart's reach to over 80 new sites.

New frontiers

Lately, other mainland businesses have started to pick up the franchising idea, according to Rudolf. In particular, he cites the growing number of businesses in the service, pawnshop and drugstore sectors that have approached him for his advice and coachings.

There are also big cities franchises for jewelry stores, business processing centers, gasoline stations and hotels that are seeing the benefit of taking the franchise route to expand their businesses. Because franchise has been could easily start at a couple of million pesos, the number of interest of franchisees understandably is lower.

While there are emerging businesses, there are also those that are becoming overrewarded and, therefore, a challenge to BE Franchise. One such is the salon and spa business. In one of the surveys they did, Rudolf noted that one of these business establishments in a commercial district had a spa or salon. "We don't know how they could make money," he said.

Making a decent profit remains one of the main concerns of BE Franchise for both their franchisor and franchisees. Long after they are paid for their fees by acquiring the franchise, developing the contracts and operating system, the manuals, and the training programs, the franchise owner remains a lifetime friend who may call for advice anytime.

Franchisees, or those who own the right to operate a franchise, on the other hand, are similarly provided with adequate advice. "While we do not guarantee that all franchisees will earn, we try to help them, for example, relocate to a new avenue," Rudolf says. Franchising, after all, has a failure rate of 5 percent, he adds.

"Our goal has always been to help professionalize franchisees, while at the same time, develop our franchisors to be professionals," Rudolf says. He looks forward to rolling out his 1,000th franchise operations before considering slowing down from his seven-day, 15-hour work schedule.

"Perhaps by that time, I'll even have my own franchise," he says, bellowing out a big hearty laugh. You have to take Rudolf seriously because, in BE Franchise's current list of clients, BE Franchise Consulting is conspicuously found.

His clients include Cravings, Fu Shiro, Hap Chan, Shanghai, Machu Picchu, Java Man.

Mobile e-mail going the way of texting

By Nico T. Gichonde II

NOKIA SEES MOBILE E-MAIL gaining an much ground as texting in the Philippines because of cheaper service charges and Filipinos' comfort with mobile technology.

"The Philippine population is young and they want e-mail more and more, which they can access now because operators offer cheaper data rates," Nokia Philippines general manager William Hamilton-Whyte told reporters in a briefing on Wednesday.

"Globe offers P5 for 15 minutes and Smart offers P10 for 30 minutes, which is cheaper than rates in International franchises," he said.

Hamilton-Whyte said surveys show that about 53 percent of the Philippines' 90 million or so population belong to the youth segment which is 15 to 30 years old. Most of them live with their parents, giving them more disposable income, especially in the 21- to 30-year-old range.

"From the texting capital of the world, the Philippines could be the mobile e-mail leader as well in the next few years," he said.

NOKIA Phils. general manager William Hamilton-Whyte

Souvenirs king ...

From page B3-1

curve will be ours," he adds.

Aside from the 15-minute to 30-minute trips to Olango and Hilutungan, the IBC also offers trips to Bantayan, Mactan, Dumaguete and Apo Island.

"We have a couple of boats that are quite fast, with a trip going to Bantayan in four hours," Aldegaer says.

Snorkeling, for those who are not hard-core divers, and fish feeding, especially for children, are among the favorite activities of IBC's customers.

"We're talking about big fish that are about two feet long. You go fish feeding and the fish nibble on your fingers when you offer them food," he explains.

The IBC even hosts the children on the kind of fish they would see.

The children's party package conforms to the islands group's advocacy for environmental awareness and protection.

"The diving, snorkeling and other activities could become a major showcase, if packaged properly. I think Cebu should start to position itself as an island-hopping destination," Aldegaer says.

do you share e-mail

or share knowledge?

NOKIA
Eseries

More often than not, today's personal and business emails contain vital attachments with information that can change the way we work and the way we plan. Problem is, accessing this information remotely is often a pain. Nokia E71 has been designed to make accessing this information easier. Opening an attachment can be just as easy as setting up or opening an email. Share knowledge, on the go with Nokia Eseries.

Nokia E71. Designed for the way we work.
www.nokia.com.ph/e71

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LIFESTYLE Fashion & Beauty
Editor Thelma Sioson San Juan
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Severe chic

2009 trends: big everything—from bags, chunky heels to bangles

THE PAST FEW WEEKS HAVE been a roller-coaster ride, with the world economy swinging from one extreme end to the other. This volatility is reflected in fashion, the unnecessary manifested in last season's minimalist trend.

But now it seems things have swung in the opposite—bathtub-to-big statement.

This season, though nowhere out of the [illegible] mood, will see a change into something "severe"—meaning bigger fashion statements with bolder accessories, as if to create an aesthetic to counterbalance to recession.

Call it "severe chic." It's about playing up accessories, as they can have a bigger part in a woman's wardrobe now more than ever.

The severe chic trends for Spring/Summer 2009...

E-mail the author at fashion@inquirer.com.ph

MORE >>

Mabuhay!

Jenni J. Epperson

Messenger bags

Don't just think big, think massive. Set your hands free with extreme messenger bags in bold, vibrant shades, like those on the runways of Anna Sui and Marc Jacobs.

Drop earrings

Drop it like it's hot! Chandelier earrings with big, bold details deliver your style statement loud and clear.

Round sunglasses

From the previous season's geometric shapes, squares, rectangles and oblongs, the coming spring's summer hues goes round. Take a bow from Proenza Schouler, Michael Kors and Vera Wang.

Peep-toe booties

This trend is super-hot! Since it's all about extremes, designers give your feet a smarter with peep-toe booties made of leather, animal prints and metallic shades.

Severe chic

Killer heels

It's killing time. This season's look are definitely made to kill, with high, spiky heels and ornate details.

Exotic skin handbags

If it's in your hands, it better be a handbag. Anti-candies come in bulky shapes, assorted leather and rich colors that take us the wild side.

Chunky platforms

Then again, if killer heels are really killing your feet, chunky platforms are your best bettors. The thicker the heels, the more details on the wedge, the better.

Hats and headpieces

A big heads-up: severe headpieces. An ultimate head-turner is never spotted without a target-shot-ish headpiece.

Chunky bangles

Everything on your wrist should be thick, heavy and stacked up. If it is totally weighing you down, it's a go!

Bags with tassels

How's it hanging? Bags get swingy this season with decorative tassels.

Multiple belts

One is never enough. Pile on the belts in bright shades, or mix and match chains with leathers.

Neckpieces

From Philip Lim to Vera Wang, the way to go is big, chunky and chic. Whether beaded or embellished, these weighty neckpieces are surely a severe statement.

Strappy shoes

Just like the multiple-belt trend, strappy shoes give a nod to the '80s vibe. This time, it's more about quantity than quality.

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List of resellers. Manila: [illegible] **Cebu:** [illegible] **Davao:** [illegible]

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For authorized resellers listing, please visit www.asia.apple.com/buy/locator.

[illegible]

Lock & Lock's Breathing Glass Canister:

A Breakthrough in Food Storage Containers

Food preservation methods such as drying, fermentation, salting, preservation in sugar like jam & marmalade, etc. require the food to be sealed after treatment to prevent contamination with microbes, allowing food to be stored for long periods. In traditional way using plastic sheets to cover the bottle to prevent air and odor from escaping, as well as moisture from coming in, is time consuming, unsanitary and an inconvenient practice.

Lock & Lock, the leading brand in household products introduces another kitchen solution the Breathing Glass Canister! Be astonished with its unique features on food preservation that only Lock & Lock can offer. This glass canister is specifically designed for people who love storing all kinds of food at home.

Lock & Lock glass canister has a breathing valve cover that automatically releases gas that builds up inside the canister when it stores fermented food. It has superior air-tight lid which prevents external air from reaching inside, ensuring the freshness of the content. It has clear glass body that allows the inner content to be seen. Lightweight and slimmer than normal glass, it is sophistically designed to add aesthetic value to your kitchen and fits the cool package of most refrigerators. Lock & Lock canister is also safe as it doesn't break into numerous fragments and scatters like other normal glasses do.

Lock & Lock stands tall as the leading manufacturer of functional airtight storage containers all over the world. Currently available in over ten countries, and having been in the Philippines for 10 years, Lock & Lock has been the trusted name in providing smart food storage and offering simple, practical solutions for a healthy lifestyle, and is recognized as the first and original airtight food container in the country. Lock & Lock is exclusively distributed by Fa-emilia Homes-ense products and is available in all leading supermarkets and department stores nationwide.

LOCK & LOCK

PRETTY hide possesses on leather cards

JEWELRY designer Tamara Comolli

APPLES' PICKINGS

Apples Aberin-Sadhwani

Fine jewelry —all fun and playful

High-end gems that are not intimidating —that's the promise of Tamara Comolli

Photos by Jim Ilota Pascuzzo

PRECIOUS YET playful best describes Tamara Comolli's fine jewelry pieces. The designer, who was in Manila recently, previewed her new collection of multicolored stones accented with witty, surprising little details.

A seriously gorgeous 13-karat peach sapphire ring with one-karat diamonds on each side, for example, reveals an unexpected cue on the company logo, a snare drop (not a tear drop, mind you) on the bottom side of the ring. A bangle that seems commonplace is made special by the choice of stones and the fact that the stones move from side to side as the wearer moves the ordinary necklace is also made unique with diamonds on one side and sapphires on the other.

Based in Germany and the US, manufactured in Italy, and available in Bahrain, the Tamara Comolli Fine Jewelry Collection was first established in 1992 by Comolli.

"When I founded the company, I thought there was a little bit of fun missing in the world of fine jewelry. It was all very serious and intimidating. And the whole emotion and fun behind wearing jewelry all this feminine joy was missing. I said I was going to create a brand with color, but high-end," she said.

At each, the designer her pieces based on color stories, making her one of the first designers to use multi-colored stones in fine jewelry. In fact, one of her standout pieces in this collection is a bracelet aptly named for "candy"—a piece brimming with vibrantly-hued sapphire charms that look sweet enough to eat.

Established

She also used a lot of Rose Gold for this collection. "Rose Rose Gold is trendy. Mixed in fine jewelry, but never one of the first brands in Basel, in the international jewelry show two years ago; it introduce a full range of Rose Gold collection, it was the biggest talk of Basel. And after us, the other brands followed."

Although best known for her "Mikado" bracelet, which is composed of little accordion-shaped stones, Comolli's first-ever piece was the 'O' or Convolute Wire bangle, a bangle with shifting diamonds that you could collect and augment.

"I wanted to give people the chance to collect," she explained. "So they buy one for their birthday, engagement, baby. It was the thing we were most known for. But now, we are most known for the pieces with the little accents. That's what is the cool really makes the bracelet tough."

Comolli offers high-end one-offs like 17-karat sapphire ring, for one) and casual pieces, like semi-drop pendants on leather cords. The brand's following range from teenagers to octogenarians who all come to wear her extraordinary pieces.

Comolli's designs are also versatile and innovative. A presentably dowdy-looking rope of pearls, for instance, is designed for versatility. The wearer may don it to complement a more elongated neck or chest, as a modern locket, or as a convertible necklace.

"I want to do precious, high-end jewelry that is not intimidating," said Comolli. "I want the ladies to wear it. I don't want it to be locked away. They should wear it casually, as well as elegant-ly. That's the idea behind it. That's the beauty of fine jewelry."

Email the author at aboh-on@inquirer.com.ph

BANGLE with colorful sapphires that move as the wearer moves

PIECE in exclusive one-off 13-karat peach sapphire ring with one-karat diamonds on each side, set in rose gold

CANDY anyone? A bracelet brimming with vibrant sapphires that look sweet enough to eat

THE MIKADO bracelet with accent-shaped turquoise stones

VERSATILITY AND PRODUCTIVITY. WE'LL EVEN THROW IN MOBILITY. FOR FREE.

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hp

LIFESTYLE Fashion&Beauty

Look sophisticated in pink

No longer looking childish, this color gets surprisingly polished

Enhance
WALK-IN FOR FREE CONSULTATION!

A COLOR MOST WOMEN associate with bubblegum and little girls' dresses, pink may not be the first color of choice when picking out makeup to make you look sophisticated. Somehow, the idea of pink makeup seems limited to a look that is very girly girl, or for some of us, makeup that we've already outgrown. It may be time to change your views on pink, as the rosy hue grows up and gets refined.

Kelly Hsu, Make-up Artist Look

Well, can be versatile, as it is no longer limited to the cheeks and lips but the eyes as well. With so many variations in the market today it is easier to choose the right shade for your skin type that is far from the chalky selections of yesterday. Also, pink makeup nowadays veers away from its traditional hues and is reinvented to more cool, mauve and tea rose to sheer, creamy, matte and shimmery finishes. Chief makeup artist for Maybelline Ba-bie Chan gives us the lowdown on looking elegant and stylish in pink.

Go neutral. When wearing pink, it is good to pair it with neutral shades of beige, brown, gray and black. "Wearing pink with a neutral palette also prevents the color from looking childish. It is all about striking a balance between colors—an example is pairing pink lips with smoky gray eye shadow to create a sophisticated effect," says Chan. Or intensify your eyes by blending pink eye shadow with a darker neutral shade by applying the latter on the crease of each eye.

Look smoky. When worn on the eyes, pink has a tendency to make your look tired or washed out. "Persons can try wearing pink eye shadows with eyeliner and mascara. And don't underestimate curling your lashes before applying mascara as it sets the scene for your eyes to appear bigger," says Chan.

Choose the right hue. Finding the right shades of pink to complement your skin tone is key to making the color work for you. "Asian skin should use pink with blue undertones, and should avoid peachy pinks that can make the skin look sallow. Olive skin should stick to frosted pinks rather than reddish pinks and neutrals (as) use pink or sheer shades of pink," says Chan.

Don't go overboard. When wearing pink, remember to emphasize only one feature at a time for risk of looking clownish. "There is no need to match your eyes to your cheeks and lips. Playing up a feature at a time, whether it's your eyes, cheeks, lips or skin, is essential to getting that sophisticated look.

CHANEL'S Précision makeup removers and cleansers

New skincare friend

Chanel Précision adopts depolluting technology to make your skin as great as that of Japanese women

IT IS SAID A DIVERSITY WHY Japanese women seem to have the best skin. Have you ever seen one with a cold? I haven't. I'm sure they do get some, but even at a mature age their skin still looks like the lack of a better word) is baby's bum: soft, tight, and poreless.

So much so is secret very artistic Japanese women do deserve their gift, first because they are God's chosen ones in terms of great skin, and second because they do take good care of their asset.

What am I talking about? The secret is in the cleansing. Apparently Japanese women take the longest time to cleanse their face, compared to other nationalities. I'm sure they don't sleep with their make-up on. They make it a habit to really take care of their skin. They probably use multi for breakfast.

The newest product on the market is the Chanel Précision Makeup Remover and Cleansers. Try this new line and make-cleansing a way of life, so you can eventually have the beautiful skin you've always envied about Japanese women.

The new line will protect your skin from pollutants. It is the first time in cosmetology that Chanel researchers drew inspiration from the depollution technologies used in urban cities.

In particular, Chanel is utilizing the tulip tree, which produces wax that captures pollutants in the air. While the tulip tree extract combined with Bioglucose, Chanel Précision will protect as well as cosmetic your skin's humour.

The new line is a simple two-step cleansing routine but it will do a lot of good for your skin. The cleansing milk is a makeup remover; it is then followed by a foaming cleanser. There are three variants depending on your skin type, including sensitive skin.

Chanel Precision will be available in concert in October, so mark your calendars before it goes out of stock. I know there friends who have already made reservations after trying on the sample (not them out).

Part of Chanel's fall collection is one amazing mascara which will do three things in just one dab: Exceptionnel De Chanel is for volumizing, curling, and maintenance. I love that it doesn't clump up and my lashes looked great and stayed in place after a long night.

By the way, I do not suggest clearing mascara, but I just wouldn't resist the excitement I felt after using Exceptionnel De Chanel. I know you'll love it!

SET Nicolas Perdomo's look using Chanel's Les Ombres Le Ligne De Chanel collection, available at Rustans.

EXCEPTIONNEL De Chanel The volume and curl mascara

LES 4 Ombres eyeshadow

LA LIGNE De Chanel eyeliner

CAMÉLIA Essentielle highlighter

KNOCKOUT!

Rita Francisco-Prieto

Lipstick Diaries: Tips from the expert and three top shades

TOP SELLING SHADES OF Bobbi Brown:

- Nude Spiceby
- Rattlesnake Pink Lip Color
- Sublime Rose Creamy Lip Color

Pro Lipstick applications, here are Bobbi's steps:

1. Start with clean, smooth lips. If needed, gently exfoliate lips with damp washcloth.

2. Lip Liner. For natural-looking definition and to keep color from feathering, line lips with lip liner before applying lip color. Otix keeps the lip color longer-lasting). Use the Lip Brush to soften and blend hard edges.

3. Natural lipstick shades, sheer formulas and gloss can be applied directly from the tube. Use a lip brush to apply darker and brighter colors that require precise applications.

Additional Bobbi pointers on placing lipstick:

1. Use the natural coloring of your lips as guide when choosing lipstick shade. The more flattering shade will either match or be slightly darker than your lips.

2. If you have thin lips, choose light to medium lip color shades and avoid dark shades, which have a receding effect.

3. To make your lipstick or gloss last longer, line and fill in lips with lip liner before applying color.

BEAUTY BUZZ

BLAKE Sequera, 3, a behind-the-scenes of The Sexy Chef

Being healthy is sexy

EAT LEAN PROTEINS, WHOLE GRAINS and lots of fruits and vegetables. Wholegrains contains lots of fiber that lowers bad cholesterol and aids digestion.

Replace refined carbohydrates with brown rice, whole-wheat bread and pasta. It's more natural, allowing the body to absorb more nutrients from these types of foods. That leaves you feeling a whole lot healthier, with more energy to get you through the day. By having a healthy diet, you get clearer skin, shiny hair and a sexy figure.

Phalia Ivers, Girl about town

Edgy Randy, dramatic Rajo

SMOKY EYES, MESSY updo's and wine-stained lips hit the runway this September season as two of the biggest names in fashion had sheer gala events.

Isabel Reyes, Bankrupt Pixie

Randy Ortiz

LA SCALA meets Neo-Japonism

STRIKING simplification

"Aspirer"

Inspiration: La Scala meets Neo-Japonism

The look: This hair was done in traditional Jonfluor semi-shower of great Indian dress. The makeup was a mole base of Chanel's Les Ombres contained with 24-karat gold leaf and Robenan liner from Kyoto, creating a modern, edgy look.

Artist: Patrick Rosas

Credits: Rump pictures taken by Nelson Villarba

Rajo Red' Gala

Inspiration: "I wanted a very dramatic look to the makeup, with emphasis on the eyes," explained Rajo Laurel.

Ortiz's "Aspirer" unveiled neo-Japanese looks, while Laurel's "Red" gala had intense, emotional hues

House of Laurel creative head Gala thought of color contrast lenses, and this really made a big difference. I wanted a pouty look but given a harder edge. Contact lenses give artists like me the license to be dramatic and give the audience a protected vision of what we are trying to convey."

Gala decided to use these magical eyelashes that made the models look like elegant swans.

She also suggested contouring with some dark lips or a really intense eye but a nude lip. We also played on the "Ignore" color and created a strong impact on stage."

The look: Emotion in design. The makeup was to be strong but not overpowering, something with character, but in the same time beautiful.

Three different looks were created, depending on the color. The underlying colors were black, red and gold. Gala used airbrushing for the base to achieve that velvety-like finish. Highlights on the cheekbones and brow bone was used. A dark smokey eye liment on the eyelid was applied and black liner all around was smudged. Red grease paint was applied at the inner corner of the eyes and on the outer part of the lower lash line, then made matte lipstick was used.

The second look was very similar, except that no red was applied on the eye area and a very regal plum lipstick was used.

The third look was a total between terror and Rogue. Rich tan and gold skin were highlighted. Monochromatic red was on the upper half of the face. One of the models wore red lenses.

All the models wore either gray, green or hazel contact lenses by Freshlook to have that unlit gaze. They also wore brunette falls by Bobeli.

Artist: Gala Laurel, creative head, House of Laurel makeup studio. Other members of the team included: Jigs Alayaga, Jojo Hernandez, Bobbie Pierce, Stacey Mercene, Merlo Bernardo, Marlon Ibanez, Eva Mindigal, Gwen Ebdane and Barbi Chan.

Radiant recovery—or skincare products for the bedridden

TO THE BRAND MANAGERS WHO HAVE been sending me get-well products at home, thank you. Being sick and constantly relapsing should have taken a toll on my face and skin. But thanks to my new road-test bodies, I have found a way to look radiant while recovering. Bright lights have contemplated how the bed rest has done wonders for my face.

Here are common skin woes and how one can combat them powerfully.

1. *Tie dull skin caused by staying indoors and lack of physical activity.* Initially I was skeptical about Avon Anew Clinical Advanced Wrinkle Corrector (Php 2,000/30g and P800/15g). I doubted whether it was suitable for oily skin as anti-wrinkle products usually are too emollient and induce breakouts.

Avon's comes in a cool gel form that contains retinol, which causes a mild tingly feeling, and glycolic acid. It is meant to be applied overnight only. Their skin will need a restoration to seal in this treatment while very oily skin can use this fast.

But nothing by a mile to the following afternoon after using it, I felt a double-take so I noticed my skin was plumper in the right places, dewy, even toned and glowing.

After three days I noticed certain brown marks from acne and wax to unsteep turning red. In a week, they had faded to pink and eventually disappeared.

Note: Works with under-six months old. Do not apply on eye areas as it tends to puff it up.

MAKEOVER 911

Kirsty Salas

Also try: Dead's Age Miracle day cream with SPF 15.

2. Bobi Emerald has come out with serum and face cream to complete its very affordable and effective facial whitening line.

As usual the toners are color-coded. Blue is the moisture-rich whitening (P44.75/60 ml, P68.75/100 ml) for normal to dry skin, and Pink is the pore-refining formula (P48.75/60 ml and P70.75/100 ml) for oily and acne-prone skin. Aside from whitening, the formulas maintain the pH balance of the skin and exfoliate dead skin cells. They target the 15-25 age range, but I find the pore-refining variant helpful at controlling shine and pore size appearance on my oily skin. The toners also boost face whitening.

The Bobi Emerald Face Cream Duo is color-coded. Blue is the night cream (P199.75), which infuses skin with antioxidants to strengthen and brighten skin. It has anti-inflammatory and moisturizing properties. Pink is the day cream with SPF 15 (P229.75). It inhibits melanin production by forming dark pigments to fight.

Using the day cream could have had a higher SPF, but whitening creams work best if you limit sun exposure as they work faster and more effectively. SPF 15 is perfect for those who stay indoors in the office most of the time and considerably cross the parking lot or the street to the mall or office and toward by-fitted car.

Apply higher SPF when on the beach or under prolonged outdoor exposure during the day. What I like about these creams is their non-greasy but hydrating feel, plus how they make your face look where you wake up in the morning.

3. The Body Shop has launched a new Whitening range divided into four groups: Drying Shop, Yuzu Energy, Divine Calm and Ginsly Purity.

Made to choose from products from a total of 19 items was a struggle but I narrowed them down to:

A. Deep Sleep's Pillow and Body Mist (P850), which has chamomile to calm the nerves and jojoba to promote sleep. Has helps me get a good night's sleep for a well-deserved rest.

B. Yuzu Energy Pulse Point Balm (P395), which has geranium and ginger, nature's favorite stimulants, and sloppy Bobi, a patented extract known to increase endorphins. It keeps the mind and body awake so you can function even if just to answer important e-mail and meet some deadlines.

C. Totally Pacify Refreshing Body Gel (P1,295), which contains seaside that boosts circulation and acts as powerful antioxidant. It has extracts of rosemary, lemon, pine, eucalyptus and wasabi, which detoxify the body and tackle cellulite and swelling due to water retention.

New glossy

Ellipse Inglorio's new glossy magazine LOOK has just released its first issue and I can say it: Classic and other beauty experts' favorite personal products ranging from makeup to skin- and body-care products. Only P125 at leading bookstores. I got mine at Fully Booked Bonifacio High Street.

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beautynews

BULGARI MAN NOW, the most petroleum of all Bulgari fragrances. This latest release is a seductive, athletic scent with exciting notes such as jasmine, licorice, geranium and patchouli.

Avon Feel Sensitive is the license to the newest scent you would want to have on your chemist. Which is set for 15 this October.

Issey Miyake's Limited Edition for 2004, Reflection is a Drop. Less than 1,000 units are available in the Philippines and only 18,000 were produced globally.

BULGARI Man

Avon Feel Sensitive

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New look for skin-cleansing icon

THE RECOMMENDED SKIN cleanser by dermatologists and pediatricians for over 30 years, Cetaphil now features a fresh, new look. Cool and easy on the eyes, the vibrant blue and green packaging is aligned with the visual brand. Image Canada used the US. However, it still has the same mild, supportive, nourishing and moisturizing formulations. Cetaphil is fragrance-free, non-comedogenic and is even safe on baby's sensitive skin. Get Aphil Gentle Skin Cleanser is the benchmark for sensitive skin cleansing in the United States and Europe for over three decades now.

Cetaphil Gentle Skin Cleanser are available in 250ml and 500ml bottles and the gentle and soothing facial cleansing bars for dry and sensitive skin.

Backless bra like no other

MACKINTOSH'S LATEST OFFering is the formful-enough backless bra.

The brainchild of Elaine Cain, runner-up of a reality-based TV show in search of a modern-day torrence, the idea was born out of Cain's futile search for a bra that stays well with halter-back dresses. The cumbersome bras with straps running across the back and waist were the only alternative.

Cain collaborated with bioinformatics to come up with the backless bra, which has a perfect support system for strap and revealing dresses and gowns. It features a completely backless construction with silicone wire channeling that prevents slippage.

The bra is made of lightweight micro fiber fabric that is soft to the touch.

Maidenform is exclusively distributed in the Philippines by Ramon Marketing Corp. Available in black and beige.

Makeup that takes the cake

IN THE RUN UP TO THE holiday season, Fashion 21 introduces the Two Way Cake to make women look best bet.

One of the most popular products of Fashion 21, the Two Way Cake gives women a flawless natural look.

It effectively eliminates shine and provides UV protection all day long.

The Two Way Cake works well for all skin types. At P185, it is definitely a good buy.

Two Way Cake is exclusively distributed by Cosmetic Revolution Inc. It is available at SM, Robinson's, Landmark, Watsons, Ever, Rustans, Metro Gaisano, ECC, Jaynes, Lee Super Plaza and Cinderella.

Call 4117332 or visit www.fashion21cosmetics.com.

RUM CAMPUS TOUR

Rum opportunity here awaits college students who are 101.5 MusiKo titled "Rum's Manila High Project Earth." Rum presents its latest rock-inspired collection in a fashion concert, while Sogie band will rock the gig. Catch the following campus gigs: Sept. 26, UE Caloocan; Oct. 3, PUP Sta. Mesa; Oct. 10, Philippine Women's University.

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LIFESTYLE Fashion & Beauty

Read it every Monday in the Learning section

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Intimidated by 'Divi'? Try Kamuning

It's United Nations Day, you can get here your kid's costume for the Parade of Nations

MISS Manila

By Jake Ramirez
Contributor

THIS IS A RUNNING JOKE among guys—to check if a guy is really straight, ask him to say "Kamuning." Now if the last syllable is pronounced a long, dragging and shrill "e," the guy is one—chances are. (Try saying "Kamuning" over and over, you'd lose the way the word rolls on your tongue.)

Kamuning is the stretch connecting Tomas Morato to Kalye Nena. Now it is lined with thrift shops that are worth discovering.

First on the list of stops? Kamuning market. If you find going to Divisoria for your fabrics a maddening experience, try Kamuning. It's somehow an extension of "divi", without the crowd and pickpockets.

I discovered Kamuning textile market by accident a few years ago. On a freestanding scholarship grant from Ina Roxales at Uliet's, I was required to buy a shawl/cloth for the first project. I went to Kamuning for it. As it turned out, I wouldn't just to fashion, I drove the crowd by the third project, the 10-pancloth shirt. As a fashion school dropout, I discovered Kamuning.

Tailor

The first-lined parking lot of Kamuning textile market is convenient, a far cry from the frenzy that is Divisoria. Choices are varied—muslin, rayon, poplin, polyester, cotton, knit, even pifia from Lucban, Laguna, or Kalibo, Aklan.

There are tailoring and dress shops—a one-stop "haute couture shopping." Snag me greeting: pure "bespoke suit with tuxedo vase. Just don't forget to bring the latest issue of Vogue or GQ for that latest designer runaway copy. When I asked around about the difference between Divisoria and Kamuning, cost-wise, I learned it wasn't much since the sides aspects of textile mills also regularly visit Kamuning.

Accessories

I got my buttons from Carolina's, since going to Tabor in Divisoria is really not worth it. Why pay for the entire row when I

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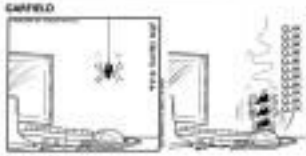

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DIVINE COMEDY

BABY BLUES

ATOMO AND WEBOY

TULOKK

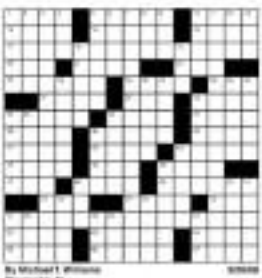
BINO MACHINE

BEN

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Hub in triad
5 Laugh-track sounds
10 Lobster and Cornish
14 Oddball stone
15 Diabetic
16 Diamond sign
17 Wide things
18 Comrades in arms
21 Previously owned
22 Bar of the realm
23 Turn-of-the-century
24 Nerve cell
26 Linguistic suffix
27 Movie sensations
32 Arabic Mac
33 Govt. agency
34 Pelican feature
36 Dollar bills
37 Lasered
38 Sensory organ
39 Cuffed's rules
40 Thanksgiving parade
42 Private of Egyptian gods
43 Device
44 Off-the-rack ratio
47 Egyptian plant
49 Unarmed fingers
50 Ocean pollutant
53 Place for trees, part 1
54 Sprite or Kahlua
56 Taste or area
57 Pirate hangs
58 Pitcher's stat
63 Funny Jack of Hollywood
64 Dried-up seeds
65 Sty
66 Tot, and Smurf
67 Hostiles and Aleins
68 Customers opt

DOWN
1 Mineral finds
2 Think out loud
3 Three plays
4 Actor Baldwin
5 Nobleness
6 Scorching union
7 Three sheets
8 Booze, bulls, and a bank
9 Wheel or weapon, e.g.
10 Hand a decision
11 Three sheets
12 Blowing bellows
13 Nolan
19 Legislator
20 Courtenay or Peters
24 Indian town
25 Worlds ago
27 Hairbreadth's breadth
28 Unplugged
29 Ocean
30 Proved with a test
31 Promotion aids
35 Bonus author
36 Hero of Dickens
38 Republicans
39 Cub-scout pack
41 Cigarette
45 Chuck's company
46 J. Edgar
48 Hoover's
51 Rapper or basketball
52 Good observer
53 Mountaintop
55 Fat tissue
57 Tiny fog
58 Bad actor
59 Part of SSA
60 Pitch
61 Bosses in law



By Michael T. Williams
Clearwater, FL

Thursday's Puzzle Solved

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

ARIES (March 21 to April 19, 2007) This is a lovely day to enjoy the company of co-workers and job-related activities. Meet new faces that find happy lives. Work just for extra dollars.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20) Romance, love affairs, vacations and pleasurable activities with children and friends. Some times are stressful today. Don't let arrogance of others, especially co-workers, ruin your day.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20) Make an honest and friendly impression on others. Be diplomatic with co-workers and bosses. You're flying at the plane.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22) You might see signs of reading a personal letter. Keep quiet about something today. Misinterpret the gift of the past and the present. Be careful with old ideas and relations are warm and friendly today.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22) You have a great day for business and commerce. It's also a good day for shopping. Be careful to your cash flow today. Turn out to be profitable.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22) The future is in your hands today. Arranging a lifestyle or work goals will turn to your favorable. It can make you up for more emotional than usual. Nothing is worry-about.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22) Be careful today to beautiful surrounded. Hugs will please you today. You need to express the tactful hands and hands of your accomplishments. You have a wonderful spirit.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21) A casual acquaintance could be a romantic or a good friend today. Be easy to meet people you like today, or at least, enjoy the company of others, especially unique people.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21) You may have some successful favorable today. Socialize, some aspect of your private life will be suddenly positive.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19) You're confident but adventure, new faces and new places! Socialize, give yourself a chance to meet exciting, fellow exciting and different. Be outrageous you've never been before.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18) You cannot ignore certain outrage. Romance do with work-ing, and, there are many matters and obligations. Clear up some loose ends here today.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20) Today, be careful to opposite and sex. Work means you have to be careful to others dealing with others. Be nice, and understanding. Others make mistakes, but so do you—we all do.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis SudoKu

By Dave Green

	9	3						
			2		1			7
					4			1
	4	2					6	
				3				
	6					5	4	
7			8					
9			1		5			
						7	5	

Difficulty Level ★★★★

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and programs at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

7	4	5	1	9	3	6	8	2
8	9	3	5	2	6	1	4	7
6	1	2	4	7	8	3	9	5
4	2	1	3	6	9	7	5	8
5	6	9	8	4	7	2	1	3
3	8	7	2	1	5	4	6	9
2	5	8	6	3	1	9	7	4
1	7	4	9	5	2	8	3	6
9	3	6	7	8	4	5	2	1

Intimidated by 'Divi'? Try Kamuning From page E1

A DRESSMAKER finishing a shirt

Just need the milk? That's my analogy when travelling all the way to Divisoria for accessories. In Kamuning textile market, there's a sweet of dressmaking supplies.

This October comes United Nation day—time for parents to get the kids an outfit for the Parade of Nations.

Kamuning market has a stall selling national costumes of different countries—Korea, Japan, Mexico, China and even Taiwan. Sino politically correct: it People's Republic Of China costumes and a Republic Of China costume sold separately.

Kamuning textile market has another renewal, makes like market for Christmas decor.

EMBROIDERED textile

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LITTLE H&L Spain

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Perez reworks the 'barong'

PEREZ'S BARONG-inspired denim-brown cardigan-linen-white-a portrait of turn-of-the-century Filipina painted a la Andy Warhol pop-art series

By Zarith A. Austria
Contributor

TO CELEBRATE Buwanang Filipino this September, avant-garde fashion designer Lito Perez of Camp Aguinaldo (now at 89 4th St., New Manila, Quezon City) remodels the barong.

Perez tries to marry the essence of the barong's glorious past with modern elements of style and comfort.

The barong Tagalog, the Philippine national costume, has for more than four centuries, been evolved according to the changing needs and tastes of the times.

It remains a symbol of the Filipino's inalienable pride and resistance to colonization.

Literally meaning "dress of the Tagalog," (the natives living along the riverbanks during the precolonial days, hence, the name tagalog), the barong originated from a doublet, a fitted garment that fell slightly below the waist, with opening on the front, and made of rough cotton cloth called canga.

It was worn by the Tagalog men when the Philippines, before the Spaniards' conquest, was better known as Maharlikang early leaders.

According to controversial literary accounts, it was in the Spanish regime when certain restrictions on the barong were imposed to clearly distinguish the natives or the indios from the ruling peninsulares and insulares.

CRISP linen, a popular substitute for pina and jusi, in jade green is used to create another green-inspired barong with puchero buttons and eye-catching hand-painted portrait of native women.

The peninsulares were the full-blooded Spaniards who were born in the Iberian Peninsula, while the insulares were the full-blooded Spaniards born in the Philippines.

Extremely status-conscious, they forbade the indios to tuck the barong under the waistband—a sign of the natives' inferior social status. They acquired the use of transparent materials for the barong to prevent anyone from concealing a weapon that could be used in a rebellion against the Spaniards. The regime also disallowed pockets in the barong to prevent thievery.

However, as more and more Filipinos thrived in business and agriculture, the Filipino illustrado (meaning the enlightened one) began to emerge.

Having mastered Spanish laws, illustrado families were allowed to own lands, build homes in the poblacion near the seat of power, and hold positions of authority in the community.

Despite the trappings of power and success, however, the illustrado were mortified to wear the barong in the manner prescribed by the colonizers—a constant reminder that in the eyes of the Spaniards, they were still the lowly indios.

Largely educated and exposed to the liberal ideals in Europe, the ilustrado men manifested their resentment and resistance to colonizers creatively—by turning the barong into luxurious clothing using the finest jusis and embellished with handmade embroidery or elaborate frills. The barong became a symbol of nationalism.

BARONG in steel gray linen with Chinese collar highlighted by hand-painted portraits of Filipino flag-wavers.

This was repeated in the Commonwealth years under the American bloc, as remembered the popular "Commonwealth Barong Tagalog" with its Tatlong Aet Belle Luz motif.

The design had the Philippine Commonwealth flag alongside the American flag ethnicized all over the fabric. It was a bold message from the nationalist Filipinos, headed by the country's first president, the late Manuel L. Quezon, fighting the United States government for independence.

HIGGINS version of the romantic look of the Hispanic barong in metallic silver silk with lace embellishments in contrasting light and dark shades of gray

LIFESTYLE Fashion&Beauty

Jun Escario: Prada lite

Unlike the Italian, Escario seemed less concerned about making a statement than making photogenic clothes

By Cherlie V. Moral

THE PROBLEM WITH SHOWING a collection that calls to mind another designer's recent work is the inevitable comparison, and, even more, the nasty undertone: Did he copy?

At our table in Mikati Shangri-La, where sat several fashion editors at the showing of Jun Escario's collection, the finale in this month's issue of the SOGO-Philippine Tatler-sponsored Fashion Week Quarter Series, we heard the name Prada whispered at least twice.

The editors were obviously referring to the similarity of Escario's clothes to that of Miuccia Prada's lace designs for the current season.

It was a flimsy comparison, however. Had Prada inspired Escario, the similarity ended in the use of material. He wears his eyesight feminine and pretty; lines were severely cut at times and largely inlined, thus provocative, which made it memorable.

Unlike the Italian, who's noted for his unorthodox designs, Escario seemed less concerned about making a statement than making photogenic clothes. And perhaps he's not always successful and provocative.

The Cebu designer is about clothes that women would feel glamorous in so they walk

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MIKE Sandro Muzz with Jimmy and Jenny Mapeka, the owners of Jimmy's Bar. Her hostess new bar along Timog Avenue

DIGGY Trolee and Baron Geisler

GORGEOUS Peter Carrillo

JAMS Cruz Lobrame

JASON Luengo, Jenna Lopez and Nika Samson of Boracay's Pearl of the Pacific

NIKA Yuchengco and Peachy Veneracion

JAJA JS and Ricky Mejico

Shop-crazy socialite signs currency like credit cards

MYRNA Fernandez with Ayala Malls' vice president: CDO and assistant vice president Rowena Tomotorr

ON MIKE SANDRO'S BIRTHDAY Jimmy and Jenny Napoles, owners of the bar Jimmy's Bar and Restaurant located along Timog, suddenly hosted a bash for him.

Thanks to today's texting technology, Mike's constant companion and my pahinge girl, PR practitioner Bonnie Cruz, zapped text messages to close pals to drop by and celebrate with them.

Unbeknownst, I didn't make it to the birthday bash because of a previous engagement. Wifey Louie texted me, "I know it's a sudden decision, and the last thing coming all the way to Quezon City is like traveling a visa to get here."

Early bird was Jenna Lopez who dashed in from her remedy office. She was followed by Mike Drigo and his fellow ex-Hard Liker Carl Arroyo.

It was a surprise to the hosts that loads of Mike's pals made it despite the last minute notice. Hey, ain't that what good friends are for, palangga?

But there was a bigger surprise when top jeanist and renowned raconteur Chris Medina performed for Mike, I was told.

Not to be outdone, beauty queen Pinchi Veneracion belted out her songs.

Hubby of our friend Gail Quejada showed off his versatile talent.

Then as finale, Mike sang, showing he was in a perfect mood to celebrate.

The entire evening was actually a mini concert for all present, dahlings.

But the best surprise for our King for a Day was when he saw his younger brother, Randy, walk in. For Mike it was a totally complete celebration, being surrounded by close friends, family, his loved ones and lots of music.

Upscale shopping place

If you still haven't noticed, palanggas, G-3 (Greenbelt 3) has become the premier chic style landmark in the country today. Its Fashion Walk was the venue for the celebration of G-3 as a "Monument To Style."

In her short welcome remarks, Ayala Malls vice president and chief operations officer Rowena Tomotorr said, "The vision of Greenbelt 3 is to provide Filipinos with the proper venue to showcase their talents. It provides a one-of-a-kind shopping and dining experience that can't be found elsewhere in the country, and in several instance, the Fashion Walk, is no exception."

While socializing, we enjoyed the superb and scrumptious cocktails from Greenbelt 5's Cibo, natch.

Then we sat down to enjoy a fashion show, consisting of creations by different Pilipino designers and prestigious international brands that have made G-5 their haven, dahlings.

Aside the show, it was like a women's bazaar! The chi-chi bands were buying our clothes like they were peanuts.

Then I noticed one socialite paying her purchase with two different credit cards. "Why two?" I asked her. "Oh, because I'm so used to buying with credit cards that one time in the States, I bought several things by cash, and since I was so used with credit cards, I signed all the dollar bills," she told me, laughing.

I also laughed. She was cool.

With the incredible mix of retail brands...from Pilipino designer boutiques to furniture shops, a mélange of motor, and the lush outdoor gardens, G-3 has truly become a "Monument to Style," palanggas.

Fashion mecca

Merrill's fashion set were present and accounted for when Theodore's the three-storeyed its most sought-after designer cult brands in an exclusive mahusay exhibit, "The Great Explorations."

Not just a store, Theodore's is a fashion lifestyle mecca where you can enjoy the eclectic taste of Theodore's exclusive labels, dahlings.

Theodore's also opened its doors to the latest addition to the frenzied magazine industry... "magalogue"...brilliantly conceptualized by the duo of Michael Salazar and Vedel Pe.

Only 200 copies of "magalogue" was printed. They were given to the invitees that night.

The launch was superbly hosted by the charming Ivan Zulueneta, on line, palanggas.

A glam party wouldn't be complete without a raffle. Lucky winners were Globe Antipuesto's Divine Lee, who got the Shoo Inserire; Inquirer's vivacious Tulu Bian Ing watch; Pony Quitiquit (Kid Robot Mini Mobile); TV personality Daphne Oseña-Paez (Blackberry); Ana Meyan Roy (P10,000 gift check), and Jetsun van Strauss and Jay Co-Unjieng. The latter two won Pramil Mosesli watches from Inaq dahlings.

Hot sponsors included Sheremy Cognac, Belvedere vodka, Bote Barbier Wines and the Pares group of Gourmet Restaurants, which provided the sumptuous Italian yummies.

Theodore's the Store is located at Quezon 1, Rockfield, High Street. It's right beside Club Ascend.

NIA Florencio with Ayala Malls' BC Ocampo and Malou's Bernardino

DESIGNERYs Barbs and entrepreneur Anne Barrios

BONNIE Boncher's Elena Bautista and Cecile Wisdome

ANNA Sotomayor, of Lifestyle Asia, Susan Jones, Stores Specialists Inc.'s Malu Francisco and Ruby Qua

GORGEOUS Angel Aquino and JP Dizon

SOUTHERN belle Isha Rondaya and fun Gino dela Paz

THEODORE'S main man Tony Fernando, Globe Antipuesto's Divine Lee and her cousin Adriana Cortellezzo, and Global One's Ivan Zulueneta

OLIVE Ho, Jonathan and Abbie Cua

EYE-CATCHING Sy Tejangkingk

RUBY Tuason and Louie Cruz

THEODORE'S rub-a-dub-dubs: Michelle Co, Ruby Sotto, Ann Fernando and Michael Salazar

GAME of Ivan Ramon Daroca, Jella Velasco, Pam Picazo and Noel Garcia

LUCERNE'S super couple Emerson and Lingling Yao and Theodore's Jun Fernando

FAB Jennifer Jenny Hontiveros and the glamorous Daphne Paez

GRAPHIC black shift shirt with leggings and boots by Topshop

TRAIL and black sleeveless polo-neck teacher skinny pants and boots

RED double-breasted jacket paired with black cropped pants and lace up boots

HEART-shaped tube top with a tiered bottom paired with leggings, boots and clutch

JEWELTONE-inspired jacket paired with checked blazer and red tights leggings and boots

DENIM pair layered with navy waistcoat and matched with cropped denim pants with pleats and lace up boots

Gothic glamour

TOPSHOP'S FALL COLLECTION IS darkly romantic with gothic undertones. It features lightweight chiffon shirting, bouquets of jet black roll leather and denim with tapered culottes and animal print sweatpants, leather blagging applied to soft jersey and translucent jersey-like floral and lace print tea-all tents.

Other styles features a quirky tailoring feel. Prugging, wool coating, and linen bottoms appear on trapezoid coats and soft woollen tapered jackets. Dresses and blouses are in washed-out fog colors of navy and plum mixed with grey, lavender and tobacco.

Another collection has brilliantly colored, rich fabrics in exaggerated shapes and Mad Hatters tea party feel. Glitter-coated stilettos and tooled-in black patent mary janes are topped off with bright clutch bags.

Robinsons Specialty Stores Inc. is the exclusive franchisee of Topshop, which is available at Robinsons Galleria, Robinsons Place Malolos wing, Power Plant Mall, Rockwell, Mall of Asia, Greenbelt 3, Shangri-La Plaza Mall, Podium, Alabang Town Center, Bonifacio High Street, and Ayala Center Cebu.

POWDER pink empire cut dress with ruffle hem details paired with T-strap sandals

WAIST-stocking patent leather dress cuts paired with cut boots

GREY halter-neck dress with graphic print paired with boots

Kakanin Royalty

By GIANA SAYO
Photographs by WILLIAM UNG

Kakanin is a generic term for all native desserts made with rice, coconut, cassava, sticky (glutinous) rice or sweet potato. A typical kakanin is usually made of various types of regular and glutinous or sticky rice – whole (grained or ground) – usually combined with coconut milk and sugar. The native desserts are usually boiled and steamed, and make use of banana leaves to line the pans and to wrap small bundles known as suman. One of the most popular kakanin is the 1900-carat, literally "layer-layer", which is a kakanin with three colorful layers – layering being essential, this made with whole grains of glutinous rice, and a kakanin layer made from rice (cane) but not rice flours. And when it comes to sapin-sapin, Dulce's, at Malabon comes to mind almost instinctively.

In the late 1980s, Aling Dulce or Dulcee Idalsa started selling kakanin to her neighbors and in the market. Aling Dulce may very well be commended as an ambassadress of native desserts. From her passion, creativity and hard work, she has mastered the creation of colorful native desserts like ube, aling kulya, kutsinta and of course, sapin-sapin.

Loyal to the kakanin Royalty.

Royal colors of the royal treat.

Home sweet home for kakanin

In 1980 she opened the doors of her humble home using a native sized blinds that's transparent Church in Malabon, it wasn't a surprise when her delightful home-made native delicacies were known by way to the tables of more Filipinos even outside of Malabon. Through sheer word of mouth, the popularity of the delicacies spread over the decades and the business is now being managed by third generation kin. Aling Dulce passed away in 1991 and it's now her niece, Dindo Ilarde, who's taking over the business with the help of her sister, Dionie "Nonie" Ilarde.

Not to be outdone with the other Dulce's in the market, Dulce's Kakanin by Mommy's Malabon Pride is made with the original ingredients and cooked the way Aling Dulce herself did. Every bite of Dulce's Kakanin also holds the philosophy that quality should never be sacrificed for profit. Dindo says that they have and will never cut down on the ingredients just to make more. "Ubli ng Lolo namin, siguraduhin mo lang na ang kanyang pangalan. Dahil dito, kailangan naming mas maisama ang quality. Kaya kung ano yung masarap dapat yun ang ilagay namin."

Probably even to the trained eye, it is difficult to spot a good sapin-sapin other than out of the box. Here is where the panel was in for scoring. Where one sinks her teeth into a slice from Dulce's Kakanin by Mommy's Malabon Pride, she will know that it is indeed that good. The texture, consistency and delicateness can be best described as "malumanay." Dindo says that what sets Dulce's kakanin apart from the other native desserts are the ingredients and how they are cooked. "Ubli ng niyog dito sa bahay ang ginagamit namin. Yung malagkit is from Palawan, rice is from Bulacan, and the sugar is from Negros. Yung Alaska Condensed Milk kasi recipe nya nasa'yo siya ipinigaral sa amin ng kanyang yung nanay kasi sa panahon ng kanyang time noon." Aling Dulce must have been more than satisfied with the consistency quality of Alaska Condensed Milk that she passed on her trust for the product, together with the secrets of her recipe, to her kin. For 30 years now, Alaska has been part of the story of Aling Dulce's kakanin.

Layers & layers of other colorful treats

yung richness ng milk hindi mo pwedeng ipagpalit sa iba

From the single store at the tunnel, which now boasts part of the store to 21 stores at the back of the original house. But cooks live down each in one go and can produce 100 trays of delicious native desserts in two hours. Aling Dulce's kakanin legacy is thriving. And the people behind Dulce's Kakanin by Mommy's Malabon Pride, Dindo and her Aunt Dhon, assure loyal customers that the future they serve will always be worthy of royalty.

More sweetness from Mommy's

Visit Dulce's at 13 Fourmilly St., Concepcion, Malabon City, call 661 264 2758 or log on to www.dulceskakanin.com

Walang tatalo 'pag Alaska ang kasama.

www.alaskamilk.com.ph ALASKA

THE HITS Jones with classic elegance.

Jun Escario . . .

From page F1

the red carpet—imaginary or otherwise, in other words: commercial clothes. (That's if you could afford him. The exorbitant amounts of his ever-trendy high price tags had the editors at our table rolling their eyes skyward.)

Escario's collection was 1920s-inspired, and with the heavy beadwork on his flapper dresses, one can feel she's getting her money's worth. Gowns that embrace some of the looks were predictable. But he had notable pieces in a white camisole dress with a black lace overlay, for instance, and the cut-it-dresses with feathered hems. They looked expensive.

The belted dresses also served to break the closing promenade of drop-waist silhouettes.

During the show, Escario sent out two gowns... one had a beaded keyhole neck line; the other a tent-shaped dress, a silhouette that has seen its selfsame share, both in red shimmering silk.

They didn't seem to belong to the collection. Plus house, like bringing out a comedian in between sets of an operatic the comedian is funny but it has no business being there. If they were meant to show his range as a designer, they failed to serve their purpose.

Escario, however, was clearly in his element when he was dressing long, pricy dresses. Unforgiving, yes, but they succeeded in making their way to the editors' mental notes, judging by their approving nods.

No mind-blowing changes here, but more of classy sexy, at least, stunning: a lace-on-satin gaze dress with wide waistband and a long flowy skirt; gam-lengthening, midriff-baring pantsuits; a halter dress in Bordeaux red.

An asymmetric dress or two, though, seemed dated and crude, like the one white top with big floral appliqués on the shoulder, or the white dress with black lace draped across the bodice. Those two looks wouldn't justify his typical high-fire figure sales.

It's unlikely that this collection will distinguish Escario from others who have created flapper (and boo) collections in the past. But, predictably, it would find its way in the pages of editorials and, ultimately, on the backs of his loyal clients. Others, for many designers, that's the only bottom line.

PROUD Dad Mike in a shirt layered with a gray sweater and paired with brown pants and white sneakers, all from Rocha by John Rocha. Daughter Milan looks lovely in a pink and black checked top with a pair of white lace cuffed pants from Red Herring, while Mika is adorable in a dress by Rocha by John Rocha.

Family affair

THE UNITED KINGDOM'S PRIMO fashion powerhouse Debenhams ushers in the new season with the best looks for the whole family from its own brand Red Herring and from the designers at Debenhams range....Jhanine Ely Martinez Villanueva, Rocha by John Rocha, A Jones by Jasper Conran, Star by Julien Macdonald and St. George by Duffer.

Debenhams perfectly suits the active lifestyle of the Debenez family—Mike and Julie Debenez with kids Mikee, 12, Miguel, 10, Nikki, 7, and Mica, 6.

Despite their busy schedules handling a retail empire and raising humans, the Debenez value family time.

"Mike still makes it a point to be home for dinner," says Julie, as she also makes time to bring the kids to school. "During the kids' parent-teacher conferences, Mike is always present, too."

When Julie chooses clothes for herself and the rest of the family, there are two things that she is most conscious of: the fit and the fabric. It is always a matter of the clothes being flattering and comfortable to any member of her family. When it comes to Mike's shoes, comfort is key.

Debenhams is at Shangri-La Plaza Mall, Rustan's Makati and Trinoma.

HAPPY Lee with her boys, Julie Debenez glows in her red top from Star by Julien MacDonald and slim jean-on pants by Rocha by John Rocha, all at Debenhams.

LIFESTYLE Fashion&Beauty

Chasing bulls and bears in style

THE WORKING CLASS

Rina Silayan Do,
Contributor

In the hurlyburly of the stockmarket, Cecilia Dolendo-Suarez stands out with her tailored yet feminine appeal

ONE ASSUMES THAT IN ORder to be a successful stockbroker, one must not only be smart and confident, but also have an overbearing, cold and calculating personality.

Cecilia Dolendo-Suarez shows that this need not be the case.

An Economics major from the University of the Philippines, she couldn't have picked a worst time to graduate... 1983, the year of Ninoy Aquino's assassination, when the economy was in shambles. Still, she was able to find work as a research analyst in Antonio Hagedorn Securities, where she planned to stay for two years before pursuing her MBA.

With the ouster of the Marcoses and democracy restored under Cory Aquino as president, the stock market went into hyperspeed. Dolendo-the maga-in-waiting, Cecilia was moved to assist. The next two who hired on first, but before long, found the job exhilarating. She was definitely hooked, and her plans to stay for two years stretched to 18 years.

After Ansott, she left to join one the first foreign stock brokerages that opened in Manila, and the largest: domestic financial institution in UK clear, Jian Hong Kit Securities (SHK). As head of the foreign institutional sales desk, the draft with overseas offices in New York, London and Hong Kong, gone in real time as the stock market went finally computerized.

Exciting? Not half as exciting as meeting Val Suarez, a lawyer specializing in corporate law, who was working on an initial public offering (IPO) participated in. He married him in the midst of a bear market, caused by overzealous amongst and a power crisis that was crippling the economy.

In less than a year, however, the power crisis was over and the stock market embarked on one of the biggest bull runs the country ever saw. Foreign stock brokerages mushroomed in the country and one of them asked her to run its Manila office. Emboldened by Val's support, she joined Meridian International Securities as president and CEO.

Price

But success came with a price. Val and Cecilia remained the power couple for the go- '90s (1990s)—"double income, no kids." Choosing to have a positive attitude, they instead took advantage of the mobility that being childless allowed them. This meant travel and adventure, as their interest in diving took them to the Sulawesi Sea, Phuket and Palau. A trip to Mexico segued to the Mayan pyramids in Uxmal and Chichen Itza, where they visited the Basilica of our Lady of Guadalupe.

After that visit, Cecilia finally conceived a child. The couple is now blessed with two children.

In 2004, she took a extraordinary job with Rexon, specializing in business improvement programs. Hesitant at first to shift careers, eventually she realized it was one of her best moves ever. Now the viewed companies from a different perspective. She now helps CEOs strategize their companies, how they handled challenges and opportunities. Now the size how daily operations affected the numbers. The insights she gained were invaluable. In 2007, she went back to working in the stock brokerage industry with fresh eyes and the extra edge she'd gained from her work.

Cecilia's signature look is sweet and understating. Her hair is usually pulled in a bun, which tells you that she knows how to rest rest what is unnecessary and focus closely on the task at hand. Professional-looking, tailored tops and pants enhance her curvish but otherwise girly smile. After all, it takes a very feminine woman to be able to remain attractive beneath the pants.

Her ultimate charm lies in her irrepressible, mischievous, childlike demeanor. Accepting whatever curve balls life has to offer, her positive attitude radiates, making people around her feel special.

LEG ROOM
Camel wool-blend ruffle blouse (P1,299.75) from Warehouse, Banana Republic shell with shirt (P1,450), Warehouse wide patent belt (P199.75)

BLACK BELT
Massimo Dutti see-through cami, model's own; Zara light gray ruffled bow-tie blouse (P1,450), Mexx blue straight-cut slacks, model's own; wide patent belt, model's own

SCARLET FEVER
Wilfred halter sweetheart ruffled blouse (P1,395.75) from Warehouse Country Road navy layered slacks, model's own; black patent belt, model's own

JEAN TONIC
Warehouse short-sleeved ruffled trench (P1,595.75), slim-cut denim jeans (P1,495.75), both from Warehouse

Laser treatment in a dab

By Cheche V. Maral

YOU CAN SAY YOUR wrinkles without undergoing an expensive laser treatment.

At least that's the claim of Olay Regenerist, a new generation anti-aging treatment from Procter & Gamble's Olay product line.

To be launched in the Philippines in mid-November, Olay Regenerist has been enjoying a steady following in markets like the United States, Europe, Singapore and Thailand for a couple of years. It's currently No. 1 in its category in China, according to Nielsen Total, Olay's marketing brand manager.

Regenerist is being introduced to the country for the first time.

The difference with similar products in the market, according to David Khoo, a skin care scientist with P&G in Singapore, is that the technology of Regenerist is moving from "skin care to cell care" by

DAVID Khoo, skincare scientist

mimicking the process of laser treatment.

At a video conference with local media from the beauty company's R&D center in Singapore on Wednesday, Khoo said laser treatments create microscopic wounds that produce amino peptides, or small protein fragments, which stimulate cell regeneration.

Olay has created its own copper amino-peptide complex that is delivered on the skin's surface but goes deep down to the cellular level to repair damaged cells overnight by pollution and free radicals. It also helps the skin produce collagen and elastin. Collagen is what gives the skin its "shape," while skin cures on supple scarcity is elastin. Cells are the building blocks of life, cell renewal, however, slows down as one ages.

OLAY claims the amino-peptide complex in Regenerist works just as effectively as retinol, an active form of Vitamin A that's widely recognized by skin experts as effective in combating fine lines and wrinkles... but without damaging the skin barrier.

Anti-oxidant

Khoo said the amino-peptide contained in Regenerist called carnosine is also a powerful antioxidant. Just using a product containing carnosine can reduce collagen damage by as much as 50 percent. In combination with Vitamin E and green tea extract, for instance, its antioxidant protection is increased by 30 percent. Regenerist claims to have more antioxidant power, gram for gram, than red grapes, avocados or broccoli.

Above-and-10 percent of 200 dermatologists surveyed recently also agreed on the efficacy of amino-peptide complex in fighting skin aging without harming the skin barrier. He also showed a graph demonstrating that amino-peptide complex worked just as effectively as retinol, an active form of Vitamin A that's widely recognized by skin experts as effective in combating fine lines and wrinkles.

In the Philippines, Olay will initially introduce the key products, including Regenerist Serum (P999), Eye-lifting Serum (P999), Regenerating Cream (P999) and Night Firming Cream (P999). An exfoliating cream cleanser, formulated for daily use, will retail for P399.

Customers who sign up to a priority list at www.olay.com.ph and www.facebook.com.ph will get first dibs at the pre-sale at Sa Saldi on Oct. 16 at select Watsons outlets, a month before its countrywide release. Some highly specialized products from the same line will also be exclusively sold at Watsons until January.

BLUE-soles peep slingback with Nike Air cushioning. $90/P4,500ish. Cole Haan is giving away limited-edition commemorative paper-weight spotlight for a minimum purchase.

MEN'S footwear with Nike Air cushioning are local favorites, like this updated wingtip style.

Young and vibrant after 80 years

Cole Haan bags Maria Sharapova as its new endorser and co-designer for a Fall 2009 special collection

TIGER weave-leather handbags called Optical Weave (above and below left) and a fringed suede style (below right) are among the highlights of the Fall collection.

COLE Haan's 80th anniversary collection

JAMES Seese (left) and Paul Overfield at the anniversary party in Tokyo's Aoyama Gichiken

By Clenchie V. Manal

OPENING A FAN, ANGELINA JOLIE sways to it. Now Maria Sharapova is endeared to give a welcome fanfare to Cole Haan's efforts in growing that, after 80 years, it continues to be relevant to modern consumers.

In Tokyo last week, Cole Haan's top brass led by chief executive James Seese and VP design director Paul Overfield welcomed some 400 guests to the 80-ish year brainchild of the American leathergoods brand.

Being one of its most important markets, accounting for over 10 percent of total sales, Tokyo was chosen as host Cole Haan's party for the Asia-Pacific region.

The event took place a week after Seese announced the company's collaboration with the 21-year old tennis star and fashion icon at the New York Fashion Week. Sharapova will be appearing in Cole Haan's spring campaign, and on designing a special collection to be released in Fall 2009.

Moving forward

The move is one of the brand's endeavors to "move forward," says Overfield, who was hired in early 2007 to head the design division of women's products. He refers to the young and vibrant attitude Sharapova's image is supposed to bring to the brand.

In his current post, which he assumed the same year, the British designer's goal is to create "more right and relevant" products from a brand that's perceived to be thoroughly traditional.

The company has also worked recently with up-and-coming Anna Sheffield on a jewelry collection commemorating the brand's milestone, it's an unlikely partnership, considering the heavily untested jewelry designer is known for her edgy designs, while Cole Haan's success has relied on its classic looks.

But Overfield explains: "She adds to the portfolio of who we are. She gives us a different perspective. There's value collaboration is all about. You bring those diverse people in to shift your mentality. It draws you to a different direction as well."

Overfield, who has designed accessories for such brands as Gucci, Calvin Klein and Oscar de la Renta, describes Cole Haan's look as "controlled sensuality," one that marries fashion and accessibility to a great number of consumers.

"It's accessible fashion in that you can wear it every single day. It's not put for a specific season," he says.

In the United States, Cole Haan's women's shoes retail from less than $100 (handbags from $400+) while men's footwear are from less than $168.

"Being able to afford it is luxury," Seese says.

To which Overfield adds: "People's perception of what luxury is has also changed dramatically. If it's beautifully designed, that's luxury."

Revolutionary

The company was founded in 1928 in Chicago, Illinois, as a footwear brand by two men named Trafton Cole and Hahn Haan. In 1979, it rolled out its first women's shoes.

Nike Inc. acquired Cole Haan in 1988, integrating a wonder-rotary partnership between sports technology and fashion in the form of sole-saving high heels that would come a few years later.

In 2000, the brand went into the footwear market introduced the first sexy high heels using Nike Air technology which gained real all-day acolades for the wearer. The counterpart in men's footwear was created in 2000.1

The shoes had an instant fan in talk show man Oprah Winfrey who devoted a segment on the show to the splendor of her shoes. The next day Cole Haan sold $1 million worth of footwear of the style the week, says Bruns.

Seems to have many fine problems, Winfrey continues to put in her orders every season, how the known star being a week before this interview, as the Cole Haan flagship in New York City's Rockefeller Center, Seese says.

In the brand's Cannes film festival, the program with celebrity Angelina Jolie famously showed off her Cole Haan heels as the red carpet premiere of "Mr. & Mrs. Smith."

Sales of Cole Haan Nike ID shoes account for 15 percent of the total Cole Haan business. The brand is bolstering this accomplishment with Sharapova's star status in reinventing the sporting line.

Market share

While the addition of products for women is fairly recent, Cole Haan now enjoys an equal market share for men and women globally.

In the Philippines, where it has been available for 10 years under 128 Elevate Footwear Corp. (with footprints in Power Plant Mall, Glorietta and Shangri-La Mall, and at Rustan's Makati, Shangri-La Tower and Greenway), the female share is also fast catching up, especially with the popularity of the leather handbags.

Reviving the purse leather, which is one of its classics, for the 80th anniversary, Overfield says designing for a brand like Cole Haan does has strong traditional roots requires runway influences as well.

"It's very important to be trend right and relevant. If it's too appealing to a woman, or if she doesn't feel emotionally attached to the product, she wouldn't buy it," he says. "We must walk the more fashion side and draw influences from that for the large part of the consumers."

In the end, after all, what women want is "something she can wear all day—day to evening."

PATENT LEATHER totes and ankle boots with Nike Air technology

STACKED-HEEL pump in yellow patent leather with Nike Air cushioning

SHOULDER bag in multi-color leather

Versatile style and comfort

SLEDGERS, THE FRENCH FOOTWEAR brand, matches fashion with function in shoes that offer multi-total stitch smoothfinish, the use of premium leather materials, and designs that put a premium on flexibility, proper cushioning, fit and stability.

It also considers many specific widths—measurement details that make Sledgers custom-fitted to the particular foot requirements of Asian consumers.

Built in comfort features include ample width, suppleness, lightness, breathability, protection and shock absorbency.

Sledgers has boutiques in Old Mall of Asia, Trinoma, and soon in SM Cebu. It is also available in Rustan's, ITC, Tristar, Cebu Gateway Makati and Tower; and in Old department stores in Makati, Mall of Asia, Megamall, Cebu and soon in SM Manduaa and SM North Edsa.

TECHNOMARINE Philippines CEO Rolly Florencio and TechnoMarine CEO and board chair Gilbert Ohayon

Gilbert Ohayon, who once worked with Tina Turner and Pink Floyd, explains the brand's phenomenal success here

TECHNOMARINE sales and marketing manager Bill Schorr and TechnoMarine Philippines' Kim Florencio

LIFE CHRONO

TechnoMarine sales in RP outpace some of Europe

By Margo C. Enriquez
Contributor

WHILE BRIDA [illegible] report on how US [illegible] are downshifting and tightening in a [illegible] economic setting, Gilbert Ohayon, chief executive officer of TechnoMarine, is encouraged by the sales growth in the country.

"I was amazed to see the numbers being made in the Philippines, considering the country's economics and GDP," he said. "We doing more business in the Philippines than in certain powerful European countries."

Would you believe TechnoMarine in the Philippines is raking in more sales than such countries as Italy?

Ohayon, who was here early this week, attributes the success to the brand positioning and retail distribution. There are eight TechnoMarine stores.

"We don't have TechnoMarine stores in Italy," he said. "In some countries, the product is sold in multi-brand stores. By creating standalone shops, we are in a much more favorable position than other places in the world. You are into the TechnoMarine environment and the TechnoMarine DNA in there. It allows the consumers to make their choices as they find the full-product range in a tightened wall.

"But when you have an environment of 300 different brands in a shop, the space given to TechnoMarine is very small, especially with big groups. But growth is not just in the possibility of displaying our product. Here, we put everything. That's what makes the Philippines a successful country to us."

The flagship store at Greenbelt 3 is located as the most up-to-date one in the world. "The distributor, Rafael Florencio, is moving faster than the brand. He knows the brand by heart. Other countries are just starting. He has more experience in retail than we do. So we are taking this experiment, trying to make it international.

DIAMOND Cruise Chrono in Turquoise

Entertainment

Ohayon worked in the entertainment industry on CBS/Fox, EMI music, producing big acts such as Tina Turner, Pink Floyd and Joe Cocker.

In June 2007, he and some shareholders acquired TechnoMarine, a brand specializing in diving and chronograph watches. (A chronograph has specific dials which can measure seconds, minutes and hour intervals.) His crossover to the watch business was born out of his passion for collecting watches—mostly chronos.

Like the artists he's been promoting, the CEO aims to make TechnoMarine rock. "This brand has a Swiss DNA." He points out that it's edgy and unconventional such as mixing gel strap with diamonds or using ceramics for straps.

TechnoMarine's repositioning itself between accessibility and luxury.

"We're trying to bring more glamour, diamonds, glossy or shiny materials," he explained. "The concept of TechnoMarine watch is chic, sporty, colorful with many [illegible] you can adapt to the mood."

The company has been overhauling the styles. The RoyalMarine, the consummate indulgence-in-hero or diver's watches, comes in various versions such as stainless steel and blue aluminum or stainless steel and PVD (a special coating that produces a black color and lengthens shelf life). It will not take a ladies' line.

Black Snow has diamond studs on contrasting materials. Sporty and elegant watch with month and day indicators, the SPX combines materials such as sapphire and black carbon fiber with rubber strap and ample movement functions.

The Cruise is the first-of-kind diamond chronograph watch, with white diamonds, leather-of-pearl dial and interchangeable gel strap. The watch is for both sportsman and fashion fulfillers—affordable yet classy.

Ohayon said: "I don't think any watch-eyes for time anymore. You use half the time from the telephones or it's free. If you ask me on the street what time it is, I'm going to give it to you. I'm not going to sell it to you. We buy watches like we buy other things—to make a statement. A watch is a fashionable accessory and a jewel."

Asked what's his favorite TechnoMarine style, he replied, "It's like asking me which of my kids do I like better. That's difficult. We've been able to do an even line which

CRUISE I Hand in purple

most brands don't do—being on two opposite sides of the market."

Competition

On competitors, he sited Jimmy Choo shoes or the bag she/she:

"My competitor would be Jimmy Choo shoes or a bag," he said. "As a watch, there are great brands around the world. This is just different. This does not follow the traditional watchmaking approach. We are more daring, and are breaking boundaries, and are following fashion moods. You can't take a TechnoMarine or a Rolex and 'Which one will I buy?' They are two different worlds.

A woman would think about spending some money on the new ceramic watch or a new bag. "Do I put my thousand dollars in there in a bag or Jimmy Choo or a Sergio Rossi or a Gucci?"

Ohayon says sales this year has grown by 20 percent over last year and by being more business savvy. They're not even taking into account the new styles about to be launched.

Why is he bullish when the world economy is shaky?

"It depends where in the world and in what segment you're referring to," Ohayon said. "If you look at statistics in the luxury industry, the big groups are not complaining. I read an article that when the economy is getting weak, luxury groups raise their prices because some people get their economy in things which they can touch, especially when banks start to disappear. You realize your money isn't in a safe place. There was a saying, 'If there's a war, all you need to have is gold or a Rolex.'"

Now when the going gets tough, it's good have gold and a TechnoMarine.

Ohayon recommended the UFA. "The value will grow. It's a great line with different versions."

LI-TONE Nice Classic

WHITE Diamond Cruise Chrono

JOANNA Peruyero

JANNA Panopio-Bolivar

KAYE Tingo

Women of substance
stand out in fashion event

SIX WORLD-CLASS designers have come together for the Philippine Fashion Watch Quartet series 3.

Presented by Metrobank Toronto Watches, the well-attended fashion shows featured the creations of Rajo Laurel, Dominic Lanting, Jo Gonzales, Lulu Tan Gan, Mindy Pelino-Tinchon and Jun Escario.

Laurel kicked off the series with geometrical-inspired pieces in elegant cocktail dresses and evening gowns.

Lanting followed with straight form-fitting shirts, dresses, skinny pants and structured wrap blouses in feminine hues from bright yellow and citrus to neutral full colors of cream, champagne and black.

Imperative cut pieces that kept emphasis on a woman's curves were the highlights of Escario's feminine vision as his show is also noteworthy for bridal classics with sparkling embellishments and pants suits that can easily be transformed into separates.

Tan Gan displayed her trademark boats ensemble with the versatility of her chosen material with pieces that range from simple casual wear and cocktail looks right down to formal and evening wear.

Then Tinchon took her audience to a science trip with a fierce and drama-inspired show highlighted by bulb-shaped silhouettes, evening wear with beaded ruffle edges and mimic flower petals as well as prints, patent and jackets in floral prints.

Concluding the series is the dazzling 2920's retro showcase of Escario in mostly black and white with intricately detailed flapper dresses, laced pants and flowing long gowns.

Co-presenter Metrobank Toronto Watches awarded Escario as its first outstanding fashion icon.

Joanna Peruyero, Kaye Tingo, Janet Palafox-Rodrigo, Cricket Tinchon and Stephanie Zubiri were chosen Fashion Watch Femme for standing out in the crowd.

Fashion Watch is also sponsored by Nikon.

CRICKETTE Tinchon

STEPHANIE Zubiri

Timeless fashion

By Tisha Barreiro
Contributor

ISABELLA BOLINTIC CRUZ launched its 20th year as one of the leading fashion retail brands in the country.

The fashion show displayed a kaleidoscope of styles from four decades of fashion from 1970s disco, 1980s excessive-ness to overarching 2000s minimalism, to this decade's fusion of the previous decades' key styles.

Rajesh Sabella enlisted several up-and-coming young designers, some of whom, he said, were his supporters over the years, to showcase their original designs inspired by the past decades.

Most noteworthy were the collections of Baby Samson, whose commissioned "70s and-mod-girls" pieces to music with silk outfits, some very daring yet not entirely ostentatious, and Happy Andrade's hippie modern-ized, '80s-inspired work with canary yellow screens that will no doubt be a closet staple for funky fashionistas.

Leslie Montero's black-and-white silk and satin collections accented by hot-pink accessories was delightful and fresh.

The show's grand finale, of course, featured Isabel-la's, founder and CEO of the Isabella brand, originals as re-inspired by Cruz-Vergara's.

The collection was mostly sleek and clean-cut evening gowns of black and cream silver, accented with gemstones. This is part of Isabella's effort to "bring couture to the department stores."

The night's surprise wasn't over, as after displaying his fresh new collection, Isabella revealed the fresh, new face he represents: Ethel Rice was of the 37-year-old GMA-ite Rhian Ramos.

"I wanted someone young and fresh to carry Isabella's new line," Isabella reveals. "I flew over Rhian on a August model contract in China, where she made one of my gowns. She was very impressive."

Isabella's inspiring story began 20 years ago, coincidentally, on Aug. 8, 2008, when a young Rajesh, after a 10-year stint with an Asian-wear retail company, decided that fashion was what he wanted to do for the rest of his life. The third Isabella store opened at Ali Mall that year.

"I'm not so crazy about the current fashion situation," Isabella said.

"That's why we went with this [luxe decades] theme. I believe the fashion trends today are on a transition period. The best is still to come."

ISABELLA Cruz-Vergara

GOINGS ON

Landscaping and flower arrangement workshops

KUSINA LA PURISIMA DE SERAFINA 3, Metrowalk hold landscaping workshops at campground workshops, 1-6 p.m., at MMTA Plant Arts training, along Lourdes Garden, Central Metrowalk Building (Ayala cor. Edsa and Ortigas Avenue, QC. Price for Guide to Landscaping is on Sept. 27-28, and Home Arrangement and Shop Operation, Oct. 10-11. Call 6388383, 8997882 or 0917-8351551.

Dance bash

St. Scholastica's College, Manila High School Unit presents "POP-PARTY" on Oct. 10, 5-10 p.m., at the SSC grounds. Dress code and guidelines will be sent in reply to e-mail. Reserved tickets are to be claimed and paid only at the school's entrance on the day of the event. Reserve tickets by sending contact information and name, school contact number and number of tickets to be reserved to: hotkiss@yahoo.com.

New Sun shop

Jose Carbajo's retail outlet, The Sun Shop, recently opened at the second level of SM Supermarket, Muntinlupa. The business unit is offering prepaid SIM packs and call cards, as well as prepaid application load and bills payments. It also offers the Sun retailer kit, a prepaid kit that will be given free of charge to retailers who want to sell Sun's prepaid items and start selling as soon as they buy a retailer. Call 3888000 or e-mail thesunshop@digital.ph.

Top UNO distributors

Unlimited Network of Opportunities, Int'l. Corp. (UNO) recently honored its top distributors at a sales rally held at PSE Center Auditorium. The company also recognized its speakers club and target club members as well as the travel incentive qualifiers to Bangkok, Thailand. Testimonies on their excellent products were

WINNER-L
floral arrangement

based and raffle prizes worth P500,000 were given away to lucky distributors. UNO is a marketing company engaged in the distribution of health-enhancing natural products and other services that address the needs of modern living. It is recognized by the 108-Global Excellence and Global Brands as "The Most Dynamic Business Opportunity"; its products Kyolife garnered "The Best Health Supplement" and Power Joint Manganese and Soji the two as "The Most Outstanding Health Drink." Call 6351228 or 6378373.

Fave shoe store of celebrity chefs

WHAT DO CHEFS TRIPON Encarnacion, Boy Logro, and Ariel and Ella Manuel have in common?

Apart from being among the most recognized local culinary gurus, these top rosa chefs can boast of one an-other for Bee | Bee | Buzz shoe collections.

As the footwear ambassadors for Bee | Bee Plain—the company's first and only restaurant-inspired shoe-line—the chefs also join shoemakers in customizing the shop's "street-chic-of-various" theme, which celebrates the diverse tastes and food cultures of different countries where their meals-in-a-shoe originated.

"Bee | Bee Buzz is excited about to partnership with chefs Tripon, Boyet, Ariel and Ella who are long-time supporters of our shops. Based on their personal tastes and footwear style require-ments, they have come up with many interesting choices from among our flats-make-shoe collection," said Jason Hsu, general manager of Rosario's International Distributor Corp.

Apart from the chef en-dorsers, all Bee | Bee | Buzz retail site's interiors are dressed up and ethnically enhanced to associate universally known gourmet staples with the shop's ultra-chic offerings, she said.

Prominently noted in colorful, mesh arena boards are famous signature dishes from each chef-endorser's repertoire. The featured brands include Kitchen and Style, Columbia and The North Face, Phillip and Teresa Plates, Levis, Mizuki and Funko.

Bee | Bee Plain boutiques are in Ayala's Tacloban, Ayala Center Cebu, Robinson's Mall and in Rustan's Galleria.

Call 8531224 or visit www.rosarios.com.

CHEF Tristan Encarnacion

Classic chic

WHILE IORA SPELLS ELEGANCE with ease and refines elegance to being sad fun in every season, it also maximizes its adherence to classic chic.

Real estate heiress Divine Lee is the ideal Iora woman.

"I may be young, but fashion has become my creative playground. By being able to play around with clothes and fashion, I can express myself as a woman in the truest sense. And Iora allows me to have clothes that can be worn day to night," says Lee, vice president of Globe Real Inc.

She loves Iora's blouse and skirt separates that she can easily mix and match. Its Gilli is out for paired up with a tailored blazer for a more corporate look, or wears as is for business-cool in day to lunchtime meetings.

Brand-cost skirts give a nice long look and silhouette. Blouses are made more interesting with floral appliqués and cropped jackets that spell business come in very corporate colors—gray, black, deep brown.

Iora is available at SM Mall of Asia, Ayala Glorietta, Ayala Center Cebu, Megamall, and Makati, Libis, Robinson's Galleria, and Rustan's Shangri-La.

DIVINE Lee in Iora

Surprise birthday bash for Pinky Tobiano

RICHARD Yee, Pinky Yee, Tony Meloto and Hayes Carmona

APRIL JOYCE AND MAYDENE Carmona hosted a surprise birthday party for Pinky Tobiano at Rustic Mansi Hotel and Suites on Scout Rallos last July 14.

Artist and Manunuri invited people who are very close to Pinky's heart such as Tony Meloto of Ground Ratings, Richard Yee and wife Pinky of Bench Inc., Philip Cumming of ABS-CBN Publishing, manager Ron Ramirez, People Asia editor in chief Arnold Ayson with and Suzette of JMA Jewelry, Gilda Arce and wife Digna of Arce Jewelry, Aga Evangelista and wife Carolina, Aga Tobiano, Ramon Tobiano, Francois Arcilla, and Cecilia Imperio.

CARMINA and Aga Evangelista, with Digna Arce

AGA Evangelista, Ramon Tobi, Pinky Tobiano, Arnel Ayson and Arnold Ayson

LIVING Stars

Editor Ernesto G. Velarde

Karylle, a kid at heart

Best part of the home she shares with dad is space for biking

By Marisel B. Cruz
Photos by Rony Homillada

SINGER-ACTRESS KARYLLE, who lived in a high-rise condominium while growing up, has moved to a three-story, five-bedroom townhouse to "reach base with other kids."

"Believe it or not, I learned how to ride the bicycle inside the condo. As a little girl, I couldn't play outdoors. It was a really busy street," Karylle said of the old home in Greenhills, San Juan, that she shared with her dad, Hr. Ghiderson Tadiongkon.

Spacious

This house that Karylle and her dad then transferred to, also in San Juan, has a spacious lot and a two-car garage. Karylle said the best thing about it is that she goes to ride her new bike— a pink vintage model from boyfriend Dingdong Dantes— as often as she likes.

KARYLLE HI

THE Thai corner

BLUE door extra mood of relaxation and calm, says the singer-actress, star of the ongoing musical, "West Side Story."

ANTIQUE Chinese lantern

PAINTING reproduction on dining room wall

DAD took this snap of her with Dang, his sister Donna and her sons.

FORMER bedside cabinets now hold her CD collection.

DINING area with eight-seat table and orange Chinese-dish cabinet, her dad's favorite piece.

Karylle, a kid at heart

From page H6

Her dad, who decorated the house, said he drew inspiration from other Asian designs. He said the living area was divided into several sections. The first corner features a bamboo divider and a mirror ornament. The Indian corner has intricate bronze and wooden figurines, and the Korean corner has elaborately designed cabinets and chests.

"My dad used to have a clinic in Vito Mall," said Karylle. "It's near the area where they sell a lot of furniture. That's when he started collecting these things. And because the renters there know him, they let him trade our old pieces for things that would fit the overall look of the new house."

Karylle added that the eight-seat wooden dining table was the first furniture she bought with money she earned. "We used to have an oval table. Mayroong ampat ang look. For the Christmas party I hosted last year, I wanted something more casual."

She turned the largest room on the top floor into her sleeping area, and the nearby area into a dressing room/walk-in closet. "My bedroom has been the same since we moved here in 1996. I find this repainted two years ago. I like the color blue. I read somewhere that blue stands for peace. Perfect 'yan para sa akin as pala."

Email mcruz@inquirer.com.ph

CUTE, inexpensive. She bought this clock for P200, from a novelty shop.

A SECTION of the basement has be

INTRICATELY carved frame is the highlight of the Indian corner.

KARYLLE'S dad is a good hunter of d with extraordinary designs, like this chandelier.

NICOLE and husband Kev Urban in the photo

How Nicole got pregnan

CHEER FACTOR

Fertility woes

BABY Karylle with cousin Zia Zia and Mamalu, circa 1988.

ONE of several framed snapshots with boyfriend Dingdong Dantes.

INSPIRED by her character Maria in "West Side Story," Karylle has genuine fond of baking. Below, the pink-storage bike from Divay.

AT THE CINEMAS

GLORIETTA 1	1 DISASTER MOVIE	2 EAGLE EYE	3 MY BESTFRIEND'S GIRL	4 BANGKOK DANGEROUS			
GLORIETTA 4	1 DISASTER MOVIE	2 SISTERHOOD OF THE TRAVELING PANTS 2	3P EAGLE EYE				
	4 STEPBROTHERS	5 STALY	6 MY BESTFRIEND'S GIRL	7 BANGKOK DANGEROUS			
GREENBELT 1	1 MY BESTFRIEND'S GIRL	2 BANGKOK DANGEROUS					
GREENBELT 2	1P MY BESTFRIEND'S GIRL	2P EAGLE EYE					
	3 BANGKOK DANGEROUS	4 DISASTER MOVIE	5P SISTERHOOD OF THE TRAVELING PANTS 2				
ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1P MY BESTFRIEND'S GIRL	2 EAGLE EYE					
	3 DISASTER MOVIE	4 SISTERHOOD OF THE TRAVELING PANTS 2	5 BANGKOK DANGEROUS				
AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 EAGLE EYE	2 MY BESTFRIEND'S GIRL	3 BANGKOK DANGEROUS	4 FLOOD			
MARKET! MARKET!	1 EAGLE EYE	2 SISTERHOOD OF THE TRAVELING PANTS 2					
	3 DISASTER MOVIE	4 BANGKOK DANGEROUS	5 MY BESTFRIEND'S GIRL				
TRINOMA	1 STALY	2 HELLBOY II	3 BANGKOK DANGEROUS	4 SISTERHOOD OF THE TRAVELING PANTS 2			
	5 DISASTER MOVIE	6 MY BESTFRIEND'S GIRL	7P EAGLE EYE				

AT THE MALLS

Ayala Malls

Glorietta
SPA MADNESS
September 29-October 12, Glorietta Activity Center

Greenbelt
SHOPPING SPREE AT GREENBELT 1
Win exciting prizes and a P50,000 Fair for every P500 worth of purchase at any Greenbelt 1 establishment.
August 15-October 19

Alabang Town Center
PHILIPPINE ROBOTICS
September 24, Activity Center

Ayala Center Cebu
SPORTSMANSHIPS ASSOCIATION OF CEBU (SAC) SPORTS MAC
September 27, afternoon, Activity Center

Market! Market!
CADDIES ON THE MENU RAFFLE PROMO
Dine at participating restaurants and get a chance to win cool gadgets
September 16- October 14

Onstage
Wyeming Philippines presents Disney's MULAN JR.
August 9 to December 14, 2008
For details, call 8557374 or log on to www.wyemingphilippines.com

Ayala Museum
Abstract: New Works by Hector Dario Jimenez
Ongoing until 30 Sept 2008 at Ground Floor Gallery
For details, call Museo at 757-7117 or 27 local 29, or visit www.ayalamuseum.org

Tri Noma
WONDERWOMAN SHOWCASE
September 1-30, 2nd Level Exhibit Area (near MOT Lvl 1)

TRAVELLING PANTS - Denim Fair
(R-Biz)

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THE ORIGINAL

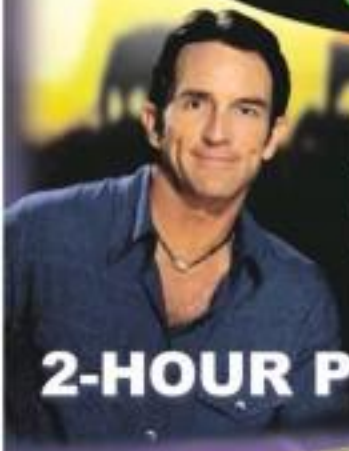
OUTWIT OUTPLAY

SURVIVOR

GABON

earth's last eden

OUTLAST



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OCTOBER 4 | hosted by Sam Oh

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ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Bernie G. Velarde

Spielberg pro-gay marriage

LOS ANGELES—DIRECTOR STEVEN SPIELBERG AND HIS wife are the latest celebrity donors to the fight against California's November ballot initiative that would ban same-sex marriage. Spielberg and wife Kate Capshaw, have donated $100,000 to the cause. They said in a statement Monday, "Proposition 8 (also known as Marriage Protection Act) seeks to eliminate the right of every citizen in our state to marry regardless of sexual orientation." AP

DID YOU KNOW...

HIGH 5 All...ss ace and director Ed Harris, and actors Renee Zellweger and Viggo Mortensen at the LA premiere of "Appaloosa," Sept. 17. AP

Charlene on Kris: Burn no bridges

By Marinel R. Cruz

"I DID NOT TALK ABOUT IT FOR FEAR of being misquoted," Charlene Gonzalez said, days after TV host Kris Aquino apologized for an apparently offensive comment made against the Eastern beauty queen, also a TV host, at a fashion event.

"But indeed, it is small, our shoulder's been bridged," Charlene told selected entertainment writers at a Q.U.I party on Tuesday, flashing the crystal claws of designer

CHARLENE Gonzalez hosts Q.U.I's "Pretty Flights"

CHARLENE G.

Viggo, Ed Harris on manhood

LOS ANGELES—ACTOR VIGGO Mortensen and Ed Harris play tough lawmen for-hire in the western "Appaloosa," they write ardent, in recent separate interviews, their views on manhood, especially in the light of a history piece that pointed out how Hollywood of late casts non-American actors to take that role for "macho" characters.

For the record, Viggo and Ed are absolutely manly as (and possibly gay) Everett Hitch and Virgil Cole, respectively, in the Old West in "Appaloosa," Ed also directed the film based on the novel by Robert B. Parker of the same title—he does a good job in his second directing shot of his "Pollock." Quiet, strong types, the two are perfect as tough lawmen who have been riding together for a long time. The dynamics of their unspoken bond of friendship change when an alluring widow, played by **Renee Zellweger**, comes to the town of Appaloosa.

Mixed bag

Both actors chuckled initially in reaction to the "manhood" question by a colleague from the town e-mail site, cutes to the male genitalia or sexuality: "I have my moments when I am not very secure about my manhood (laughter) but I'm not going to talk about that," quipped Viggo, who won a Tobin embarrassed with the term of his favorite Argentine soccer team, San Lorenzo.

"Who knows?" asked the actor who also learned reasonably with fellow "A Mystery of Violence." "I think the lines are not so distinct as some people would like them to be between men and women in terms of behavior, responsibilities and roles. There are all kinds of men and women in terms of behavior, responsibilities and roles. There are all kinds of men and women. All in all mixtures of influences, genetics, dispositions, upbringing and culture. It's a mixed bag that we've all handed in the beginning that we keep adding to or it keeps being added to for us as we grow up. I wouldn't say manhood—I would just say as a person there are things that embarrass me or make me feel unsure or not awful."

Asked how he identifies with his character's sense of loyalty and honesty, circa 1882, Viggo answered, "I do get upset when people take (can't defend themselves are being lied to or treated badly. If I have a chance to do something about it, I tend to speak up. Sometimes, it's offensive to people but I try to be fair and well informed. I don't know if I'll be able to be as bold about casting out jerks, the way Everett and Virgil are."

Getting old

Turning 50 next month, Viggo talked about getting old. "I don't spend a lot of time thinking about it. When someone says, 'Guess you're this or that,' I'll usually say, 'I'm about as happy as I've been in my life.' I have to say that, with the years I have been working at, and with the things that have been going on in my personal life and lately in the last couple of years, I do feel more fired in the morning than I used to. I'm shooting down a lot so I have to make sacrifices."

Ed, for his part, obliged with: "It was years of the responsibility of being a man, especially in America, is not being locked into this macho posturing that a lot of guys feel they need to put forth to get through the world—whether that's because they're insecure or it makes them feel safer or it keeps them out of trouble." It does what he meant by "macho posturing," Ed stood up and demonstrated the cocked walk every—a style macho swaggers. "I have no way to be if he is a difficult situation, where I honestly put out the energy implying 'Don't f**k with me.'"

Ed, who is married to actor **Amy Madigan**, clarified, "But you don't have to do that all the time, especially in your relationships with people, can be calmly self-assured. You're not intimidated by other people. It's not like you go, she basically told to me. 'You're going to have to open up a little bit here, buddy. You're going to have to share some of your thoughts and feelings with me or I'm just going to walk.'

Restricting self-image

"You're not to have a self-image that is restricting or restrictive, that prohibits you from experiencing life in a fuller way. That changes your attitude about certain things. It gives you more confidence in a human being on the planet in a certain way and it makes you feel secure about your manhood. A lot of the homophobia in this country is because guys are afraid that they have a tendency—that they like a man."

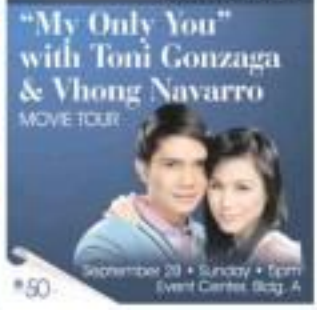
The actor, 57, explained how he discovered Robert B. Parker's novel and why it inspired him to direct again. "I hadn't directed a film since 'Pollock,'" he said. "I wasn't really thinking about directing but I was ready if something inspired me. I had this book that I brought with

INQUIRER

ONLY IN HOLLYWOOD

Ruben V. Nepales

...and what Renee thinks of her two manly 'Appaloosa' co-stars



Charlene on Kris: Burn no bridges

Transcript 11

Randy Ortiz at the Edsa Shangri-La Hotel, Kris commented that Charlene was "pa-star" because the latter's grown-way not in the shade of the sri model. At the end of the show, Charlene confronted Kris, asking, "Do you have a problem with my dress?"

In a text message to "TV Patrol" Xtic said, "Obviously [Charlene] doesn't like me... my mistake was, I gave her another reason to dislike me... so I apologized."

Charlene said she was happy that the public took her side when the incident was reported in the papers. "Nakakataba ng puso. I guess it means that I've planted good seeds through the years."

E-mail mariss@inquirer.com.ph

Brit reality TV...

Transcript 44

a great weather and friend."

The son of a bus driver and a supermarket cashier in Hyderpanda, Hamed, Penn attended St. Mary Middle School, where he developed love of music by singing in the choir at Chester Park Junior School and took other drama in several theatrical churches.

Almost quit

Before BET, he said, he had given up on singing due to financial difficulties. He could not vocal the steady care years accountant of poor health.

"I was all set to surround in work, I got knocked off while hiking to the workplace and broke my collar bone," he what.

ed. "What has happened to the last 18 months, I would never have predicted. I always regarded singing as something I did for myself, [not] as a career."

Penn doesn't even name from a much-toting family. He got hooked on classical music after watching the *Steven Spielberg* film, "ET," "I progressed from there to Tchaikovsky, then Brahms and on to Dvorak.

Coming across a cheap recording of Jose Carreras, my love of opera began. Daniel him sing, 'Che Gelida Manina' from 'La Boheme' and there was no turning back."

For tickets to "Paul Penn: Live in Manila!" call (0906) 319-4370.

CINEMA ACCESS: 635-5555

MOVIEWORLD

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www.robinsonsmovieworld.com

GALLERIA

1 BANGKOK DANGEROUS	6 I.T.A.L.Y.
2 DISASTER MOVIE	7 BABYLON A.D.
3 THE SISTERHOOD of the TRAVELLING PANTS 2	8 IndieSine: TEACH ME to LOVE
4 MY BEST FRIEND'S GIRL	9 RIGHTEOUS KILL
5 ROOM 213	10 100 FEET

ERMITA

1 THE SISTERHOOD of the TRAVELLING PANTS 2	
2 I.T.A.L.Y.	6 RESERVED
3 MY BEST FRIEND'S GIRL	7 RESERVED
4 DISASTER MOVIE	8 RIGHTEOUS KILL / 100 FEET
5 BANGKOK DANGEROUS	9 BABYLON A.D.

METRO EAST

1 THE SISTERHOOD of the TRAVELLING PANTS 2	5 MY BESTFRIEND'S GIRL
2 I.T.A.L.Y.	6 BANGKOK DANGEROUS
3 100 FEET	7 BABYLON A.D.
4 DISASTER MOVIE	8 GRAVEDANCERS

NOVALICHES

1 MY BEST FRIEND'S GIRL	3 LOST in BEIJING
2 BANGKOK DANGEROUS	4 I.T.A.L.Y.

PIONEER

1 THE SISTERHOOD of the TRAVELLING PANTS 2	3 MY BEST FRIEND'S GIRL
2 BANGKOK DANGEROUS	4 DISASTER MOVIE

STA. ROSA

1 PATHOLOGY	5 I.T.A.L.Y.
2 PERFECT CREATURE	6 BABYLON A.D.
3 PROJECT X	7 DEATH RACE
4 I.T.A.L.Y.	8 PATHOLOGY

LIPA

1 I.T.A.L.Y.	
2 BABYLON A.D.	
3 DEATH RACE	
4 PATHOLOGY	

DASMARINAS

1 100 FEET	5 I.T.A.L.Y.
2 BANGKOK DANGEROUS	6 100 FEET
3 I.T.A.L.Y.	7 BANGKOK DANGEROUS
4 DISASTER MOVIE	8 DISASTER MOVIE

IMUS

1 I.T.A.L.Y.	
2 100 FEET	
3 BANGKOK DANGEROUS	
4 DISASTER MOVIE	

ANGELES

1 BANGKOK DANGEROUS	3 BIG STAN
2 I.T.A.L.Y.	4 RIGHTEOUS KILL

STARMILLS

1 RIGHTEOUS KILL	4 FOR THE FIRST TIME
2 I.T.A.L.Y.	5 BABYLON A.D.
3 BANGKOK DANGEROUS	6 BIG STAN

BACOLOD

1 BANGKOK DANGEROUS	
2 BIG STAN	
3 JIBOY	
4 DEATH RACE	
5 BABYLON A.D.	
6 I.T.A.L.Y.	

ILOILO

1 BABYLON A.D.	
2 BANGKOK DANGEROUS	
3 I.T.A.L.Y.	
4 DEATH RACE	
5 FOR THE FIRST TIME	
6 GRAVEDANCERS	

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Brit reality TV sensation sings to Manila Oct. 8

By Pablo A. Tariman
Contributor

BRITISH TV TALENT SEARCH WINNER Paul Potts, whose rendition of "Nessun Dorma" was seen and heard by 367 million television on You Tube, will perform for the first time in Manila on Oct. 8 at the Philippine International Convention Center.

Potts will be accompanied by an ensemble of Filipino musicians. He told the Inquirer, "I will sing the 'Istanbul' duet from 'La Traviata' with Filipino soprano Rachelle Garcellano."

Life has certainly changed since he won "Britain's Got Talent" last year, Potts said. For his audition, he sang "Nessun Dorma" from Giacomo Puccini's opera, "Turandot."

"I have gone a long way from cycling 13 miles to work ... to flying thousands of miles for an engagement," he said. "I am fortunate to be able to do what I love doing." His first album, "One Chance," sold 2 million copies last year.

No expectations

"No two weeks are the same for me these days," explained the 37-year-old British tenor (born Oct. 13, 1973), who has appeared in numerous opera productions since 1999. "Nessun Dorma it's a full week of promotions across Europe. There just two weeks have included performances in Germany as a football match, in a talk show, and a music concert for 11- to 18-year-olds that was attended by 12,000 people."

How did he react when his first recording sold millions? "Will shudder disbelief," he said. "Also with incredible gratitude. I thank all the people who bought my records and your tickets!"

When he joined BGT, he had no expectations. "In later stages, I realized as all singers do on the show with Yvie (Barnard)," he said, referring to the tenor's soprano vocal coach. "What I learned most is never give up."

What does he require of a voice teacher? "A lot of training is learned on tour, you need to respect, and get along well with, a teacher. Yvie is

next »

PAUL Potts has "been a long way since driving to work."

PYTHIRL, far right...does her Gay Dorna bit with an Eartha Kitt song. From left, "Dreamgirls," "Isola Bella," and Jag as Don Quixote.

Still the star in long-running gay revue

By the Inquirer Entertainment staff

When we discovered Club Mesah on Boni Avenue in Mandaluyong four years ago, it was a classy but struggling joint. We saw its first "Bedazzled" gay revue, featuring the club's homegrown Folies de Mesah, more than once.

Often, there would be less than 10 of us in the audience but the "girls" would never skip even a half-notch from their top performance level.

This dedication — added to talent and lots of hard work — has paid off. "Bedazzled" is now in its eighth incarnation, and Club Mesah, still a dressy joint, is no longer struggling.

"Bedazzled 8" stars the hilarious Pyrene, reprising her previous "Bedazzled" characters, most illustrious notably Xiaohua Kho-Gan Zu-ma. And our favorite waiter-fag, who made his debut as Chris to Pinnacle's Gia in a "Miss Saigon" satire two seasons ago, has a spot number now as Don Quixote-cida Mancha.

Entertainer producer Pochoie Medallion and his partner Bets, who is the creative genius behind "Bedazzled," are planning a "Star of..." series in January. Meanwhile, "Bedazzled 8" is running till Aug. 8 weekly. Tedy (Cell 533.2826.)

Rushes Special

Musical love team

Hawaii-D of the Backstreet Boys is in the runaway to join our cast, pop star Sarah Geronimo is promoting "I'll Be There," the first single off her latest album, "Just Me," which was produced by Christian de Walden of Hollywood.

Hearts and Smile awarded "I'll Be There" to a duet. The pretty singing dreamy, one of our favorites, is thrilled. "I used to just listen to Backstreet Boys. Suppose, do close to me a Hawaii-D!"

Bulagtas School of rap

TV/radio events Ramon Bautista is challenging any and all rappers to a showdown. He unusual confidence stems from a recent training with one "Master Bulagtas" at a certain Bulagtas School of Rap.

Say what?

"My favorite podcast drama told me about this underground rap school while we were palpitating along the tiles," Bautista says in a note he sent Rushes. "He said the masters does not take just anyone in. True enough, I was the only student when I got there."

Rules he left his fans, Bautista pleads, "Pinoyote nyo naman ako at pasuhin!" Consider yourself warned.

Why she's here

Australia-based Rowenas Villar, who showcases outfits Pam G. and Andu in the upcoming Manila production of "West Side Story," has realized a truth that goes straight to the center of her life. Villar: "In the Philippines, it's not easy for people to unlock places such as this. It's kaya realm... they can better afford to go to the theater. Therefore, artists over there are paid much more, but I'm not complaining. I'm doing this ("West Side") because I love to dance and I'm having so much fun!" Well, we had so much fun watching you, too, girl.

3 priests for CJM

They won't be giving up their day jobs, but three Roman Catholic priests from Ireland have just mixed music in partnership with vocation. They signed a deal with global recording giant Sony BMG — on the steps of London's Westminster Cathedral.

Fr. Eugene O'Hagan, 40, and his brother, Fr. Martin, 45, and Fr. David Delargy, 44, have formally launched their other career as The Priests. Record execs believe the trio, with or without divine intervention, is bound to be a best-selling act.

Their unique contract exempts them from personal appearances and recording duties in the event, for instance, of a funeral (other about a wedding?) where their presence may be requested.

Further, the contract stipulates, The Priests' debut album will be launched in Vatican City. Speaking of which, it is being released soon on the Sony Classical label.

Headline to say, a percentage of the record sales proceeds will go to a charity of the trio's choice.

Warrior hers type

Director Daniel Lee, on seeing Chinese superstar Andy Lau in Zhao Ziyang in "Three Kingdoms: Resurrection of the Dragon": "His image and demeanor fit the role of the great warrior. Like Zhao, Andy projects the small, dream of a great warrior and the qualities of a hero. Plus, he is the most revered and bankable actor in Asia."

Hey, Clay is gay

NEW YORK — Clay Aiken is finally confirming what many people already know: He's gay.

The cover of the latest People magazine shows Aiken holding his infant son, Parker Foster Aiken, with the headline: "Yes, I'm Gay." The cover also has the quote: "I cannot raise a child to lie

NEW! is Sarah Geronimo no more!

LINDSAY Lohan, right, and long-time duo, DJ Samantha Ronson, during the recent fashion week in New York.

HOWIE D (left) and AJ McLEAN.

ANDY Lau, warrior-hero.

or hide things."

The baby's mother is Aiken's friend and record producer Jaymes Foster.

Aiken, runner-up on "American Idol" 2003, rarely addressed the frequent rumors about his sexuality in an interview with The Associated Press two years ago, he said: "I don't really feel like I have anything to say anymore or lie myself and God and the people I love."

AP

As for Lindsay...

LOS ANGELES — Lindsay Lohan has confirmed what the world has guessed: She'll leave darling Samantha Ronson "a very long time."

Lohan, 22, casually told the co-host of the syndicated radio program "Loveline" on Monday that she'll leave during the 31-year-old DJ.

AP

OMG! Celebrity Barkadas Get Together!

For the first time, Globe is gathering celebrity barkadas from two major television networks in a rare celebration of friendship this Saturday, September 25!

Hosted by Luis Manzano and Sam Oh, Globe's OMG! - "Oh, May Genk!". Day will be FREE and open to everyone.

OMG! will be held at the SMX Convention Center beside SM Mall of Asia, featuring a one-of-a-kind variety show that will bring together the likes of Angelica Panganiban, Chris Madrigal, Michelle Madrigal, JC De Vera, Maxine Magalona, and Mo Twister.

Hot performers Rayver Cruz, Gabe Valenciano, and Pinoy Dream Academy stars Luarin Locsin, Bulong Dillon, and Miguel Maristela will also rev up the stage at 2PM.

Barkadas will be able to enjoy E-Games tournaments (featuring popular games, Cabal) and other exciting barkada activities like wall climbing, velcro wall jump, and obstacle courses as early as 10AM.

There will also be a Great Phone Sale where fantastic deals like the MyPhone 8321 for P1,999 or the Nokia 1208 for as low as P1,199 will be available for purchases of at least two or more units. Other mobile phones for as low as P950 will also be on sale so barkadas can always be connected 24-seven!

Barkadas who want to go to OMG! can use Globe's latest services such as Unlimited Friendster and Facebook UPSMs or Unlimited Chat on YahooMessenger to spread the news and invite more friends.

To cap off this celebration, hot local bands Rocksteady, Imago, Callalily, and Pleasureman will rock the night away. It will be a whole day geek to remember!

"Dunk, spread the news! Sign up for Unlimited Chat on YahooMessenger. Send CHAT on 2878 for FREE trial until October 4.

Are you on Friendster? Globe let's you get unlimited alerts and UPSMs on your mobile phone and even upload pictures to your Friendster account via MMS! ...Just text REG<space>your e-mail address<space><password> and send to 2878.

Viggo, Ed Harris on manhood

From page B1

me to this trip that my family made to Ireland. I began to read it one day in the hotel. I enjoyed Hubert's writing and the dialogue between them. I enjoyed it. It made me laugh and it made me feel comfortable, good. I just thought it would be really fun to capture that relationship on film. Before I even finished the book, I called my agent and asked him if the book was available. And it was—I pounced from there.

On coming to the ground role of Allister French, the sorta amateur in some ways the true gentleman out instantly attracted to in surging degrees, Ed revealed, "When I read the story and began reading on the script, one of the things I noticed in earlier part of was that the woman character does not come across as a calculating bitch. It's one of the reasons why I said, 'Hmm. The character is not a devil in disguise. She's not a deceiver. She's much more of a survivor in my mind. I find her a very fascinating character. And I was really proud of the work that Hanna did. You don't know anything about the character in the novel. She's not explained."

Presidential bet

Pressed to comment on the US presidential contenders, Barack Obama and John McCain, Ed smiled, held back. "I grew up God that Obama be the next president. I'm trying to think of where to move to if he's not elected. I find that the energy and the mood have not really been positive in the past eight years. People say the US pendulum doesn't really always then switch. But then and I really feel good about Obama—his spirit, energy and his intelligence and the fact that he can say a sentence."

In addition to co-writing the screenplay and co-producing, Ed also sings the song that can be heard during the film's end credits. Yes, he also co-wrote "Don't Never Leave My Heart."

Belle in the cast

Byrnes had the pleasure of being the bride to a mostly male cast that also includes Jeremy Irons as the villain. "I can't complain," she declared. "Follows in chaps and boys, and an hon-

THE three big Hollywood stars, as we met and talked with them during the press con in LA. [from top] Renee Zellweger, Ed Harris, Viggo Mortensen

As for Viggo and Ed, she gushed, "Both are really nice guys. They're both gay guys."

But for the unabashed fan, still curious, it wasn't a male-dominated set. "The crew is full of girls," Renee pointed out. Female wranglers everywhere. Only when the camera turns this way that I'm the only girl."

Of her character, Renee said, "One of the things I liked most about Allie was that in spite of her unfashionable roundup, you can't judge me. I think it's important that don't see a middle-aged person. She's just very limited in her choice of options. And she's a survivor. She's clearly alone. This is the first character I ever played where I was uncertain about the wardrobe. I had drawn about her circumstances."

Anne Hamilton

The 30-year-old actress confirmed that she just finished playing Anne Hamilton, George Hamilton's mother and Sandra Bullock's friend for two seasons among the two women shopping at Barneys one time), for "My One and Only." "Yes, I just did it," Renee said. "My bags are still packed."

Of her roles, "I will root here on tradable character because it is not dealing George's childhood. Renee reported that she never met the perpetually tanned actor during the filming. "I never met him," she stated. "Charlie Hunn, who wrote the script, was there everyday. This project has been around for a long time. It's a story about a woman (Anne) who has enough of her philandering husband in Texas finds in 1950 and collects her sons, as soon as she can find them (laughter). She said her sons his the road. She puts back in visit easier of her ex-suitor to see if anybody might make a nice replacement father for her children. On the road, she becomes a mother and they becomes a family. It's really a beautiful story. I love that the character is pseudo-sophisticated. I loved having sons. It was so much fun. I took them on the road steps."

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